CHARLES JAMES FOX

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Charles James Fox

# CHARLES JAMES FOX

## A COMMENTARY
## ON HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER

BY WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

EDITED BY

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# INTRODUCTION

About the middle of the last century Walter Savage Landor, then living placidly for the most part, but with intervals of indignation, at Bath, was provoked by the remark of *The Quarterly Review* that, among authors of any sort of note, he alone clung with equal pertinacity to his ancient abuse of Bonaparte as a blockhead and coward, of Pitt as a villain, of Fox as a scoundrel, of Canning as a scamp.[1] This drew from the unsubduable old Roman, as Carlyle called him, a letter addressed to *The Examiner*,[2] in which he

[1] Referring to the abuse of the Duke of Wellington, to which some English writers had degraded themselves, the reviewer had said: "But the truth is, and we are bound to tell it, it was the Liberal press in France that in this matter gave law to our patriots. . . . When French people could no longer resist the evidence of all great gifts and noble qualities with which that record was filled, when they owned that it would not do to persist in their old vein of disparagement . . . when this was the result in France, the home faction saw it was time to consider the matter, and they undoubtedly showed and continue to show signs of repentance. The exceptions are few. . . . Among authors of books of any note, verse or prose, we recollect of none unless Mr. W. Savage Landor, who, however, clings with equal pertinacity to his ancient abuse of Bonaparte as a blockhead and a coward, of Byron as a rhymer wholly devoid of genius or wit, of Pitt as a villain, of Fox as a scoundrel, of Canning as a scamp, and so on."—*Quarterly Review*, vol. 86, p. 130 (Dec. 1849).

[2] *Examiner*, January 15, 1850. The letter is reprinted in Landor's *Last Fruit off an Old Tree*, p. 339.

appealed to every one who had read his writings, however negligently or malignantly, to avow the injustice of the charge. That he had not always been content to use the most deferential forms when speaking of those eminent persons will be seen from his *Commentary* on John Bernard Trotter's *Memoirs of the Latter Years of the Right Honourable Charles James Fox.*

Landor's *Commentary,* though written toward the end of 1811 and printed early in 1812, is now published for the first time. The manuscript must have been destroyed ages ago. Of the printed copies one only seems to have survived. This is in the possession of the Earl of Crewe, who kindly allowed me to transcribe it. On the fly-leaf is the following manuscript note, written by his lordship's father, Lord Houghton, then Mr. Monckton Milnes:

"I believe this volume to be unique. Mr. Landor told me he was aware of the existence of no other copy. The whole edition was wasted, with the exception of this copy, which the author gave to Mr. Southey.

"Richd. M. Milnes."

Trotter's *Memoirs of Charles James Fox* appeared in 1811, and quickly ran through three editions. The book was dedicated to the Prince Regent in recognition, amongst other things, "of that interesting sensibility which endears you so much

to those who are acquainted with you in their private circle—and of your public virtues, which are drawing upon you the love, admiration and blessings of this great empire."

Trotter's work made a considerable stir at the time, and was reviewed by Canning and Ellis in the twelfth number of *The Quarterly Review.* Of the author one may read in *The European Magazine* for 1806 that in the August of that year Mr. Fox, Secretary of State, appointed Mr. Trotter, nephew of his late friend, the Bishop of Down, to be his private secretary; and Trotter's narrative shows that before then he had been on intimate terms with his patron, whom he visited at St. Anne's Hill and accompanied on a tour to the Low Countries and France in 1802.

The earliest reference to Landor's *Commentary* is in a letter Southey wrote to him on February 10, 1812.[1] In this Southey says that he had received from Mr. John Murray a parcel containing, among other things, an unfinished *Commentary* upon Trotter's book. Southey proceeds:

"*Aut Landor, aut diabolus.* From the manner, from the force, from the vehemence, I concluded it *must* be yours, even before I fell upon the passage respecting Spain[2] which proves it was yours. I could not lie down this night with an

[1] The correspondence between Southey and Landor is given in Forster's *Walter Savage Landor: a Biography,* London, 1869.

[2] See below, p. 182.

easy conscience if I did not beseech you to suspend the publication till you have cancelled some passages: that attack upon Fellowes[1] might bring you into a court of justice. . . . It would equally grieve me to have the book suppress, or to have it appear as it is. It is yours all over—the *non imitabile fulmen.*"

It was at Southey's request that Mr. Murray, in 1811, had agreed to bring out Landor's *Count Julian: a Tragedy.* But Landor sent his *Commentary* to the same house without consulting Southey, who first heard of it, as we have seen, not from Llanthony, where Landor was now living, but from London. Mr. Murray may have asked him to look over the proof-sheets of the work—or rather of portions of it, for Southey had not yet seen the *Dedication* or the *Postscript*—in the hope that the author might be induced by a third party to tone down certain passages. This at least seems a fair inference from letters which have still to be quoted.

The first is Landor's reply, dated February 15, 1812, to his friend. Had he never mentioned, he asked Southey, that he was writing this same *Commentary*? In truth, Landor proceeds, he had a habit of not recollecting how much or how little of his thoughts and intentions he had imparted to his correspondents, to whom there-

[1] See note on p. 146.

fore he must sometimes appear the most barren of tautologists and sometimes more reserved than a Jesuit or a Quaker. What a mistake, though, it was to judge people by their letters; or, for that matter, by anything they write. Look at those letters of some eminent authors then recently published, and how the world was taken in by them. "Why," says Landor, "not twenty men know that Addison and Pope abounded in the worst basenesses, or that Swift was anything better than a satirist and misanthropist."

But about the *Commentary*, Landor would do precisely as Southey recommended. Would Southey point out other passages which had better be cancelled. It had come to be written, Landor explained, in this way. He had been trying to compose an oration which should be more in the Athenian style than speeches delivered in the English Parliament or the French Academy. Beginning with an apology for praising the living rather than the dead, he had pronounced a eulogy on Warren Hastings, comparing him with Charles James Fox but admitting that the great Indian ruler might possibly have been deaf to the voice of misery and of justice. Then he had compared him with Lord Peterborough and likewise with Wellington, proving to his own satisfaction that Wellington was at any rate the equal either of Peterborough or Hastings. But of what avail

to write orations in the Athenian or any other style?

"After all, who will read anything I write? One enemy, an adept in bookery and reviewship, can without talents and without industry, suppress in a great degree all my labour, as easily as a mischievous boy could crush with a roller a whole bed of crocuses. Yet I would not destroy what I had written. It filled, indeed, but eight or nine sheets; interlined, it is true, in a thousand places and everywhere close. I transferred, then, whatever I could conveniently, with some observations I had written on Trotter's silly book, and preserved nearly half, I think, by adopting this plan."

Landor is amazed that Mr. Murray should object to publish his *Dedication* to Madison, President of the United States. In his own opinion it was a very temperate effusion, and, he believes, not ineloquent. America had not declared war against us yet; as a matter of fact, hostilities did not begin till the following summer; and Landor wished to point out what harm a war would do to America. How deplorable that free men should contend with the free! The *Dedication* was the best thing he had ever written, and contained, he said, the best part of the aforesaid oration. He would ask Mr. Murray to send it to Southey, along with a piece aimed at Saurin, Attorney-General of Ireland, but not mentioning that gentleman by name, nor subject, Landor

thinks, to the cognisance even of an Attorney-General's law. As the piece in question is in the *Postscript* to the *Commentary* and is included in the present volume, the reader may form his own opinion as to Landor's interpretation of the law of libel.

Thus we have it from Landor that he had composed an oration, portions of which he afterwards incorporated in the *Commentary* and in a *Dedication* prefixed to it. The parallels between Warren Hastings and Fox and between the Earl of Peterborough and Wellington appear to have been discarded. I can find no trace of the former in other works by Landor, but Peterborough has an imaginary conversation with Lord Chatham, and a remark made in the conversation between Talleyrand and Louis XVIII. may have been suggested by some passage in the missing parallel. "Fortunate," the French statesman is made to say, "that the conqueror of France bears no resemblance to the conqueror of Spain. Peterborough (I shudder at the idea) would have ordered a file of soldiers to seat your majesty in your travelling carriage, and would have reinstalled you at Hartwell." [1]

Very characteristic of Landor is the plea that his memory—a singularly retentive one—was apt to play him false. So also is the notion that Gifford,

[1] *Landor's Works*, iii. 388.

editor of *The Quarterly Review*, lay ever in wait for him. Already, it will be noted, he had learnt that Mr. Murray was uneasy about the *Dedication*. On this point there is other evidence. Gifford, who was furious about Landor's pamphlet, had written to Mr. Murray: "I never read so rascally a thing as the *Dedication*. It shows Landor to have a most rancorous and malicious heart. Nothing but a rooted hatred of his country could have made him dedicate his jacobinical book to the most contemptible wretch that ever crept into authority"[1]—James Madison, that is, President of the United States.

One can but hope that Landor was spared the perusal of this appreciation of his character. Southey, it is plain, did his best to avert an explosion. His reply to Landor's letter is a masterpiece of tact. Writing on February 21, 1812, he told his friend that he had now read the *Dedication* and *Postscript*, and found them full of perilous stuff; but he stated his objections so politely that even Landor could not have taken offence. He thought Landor had "plucked George Rose most unmercifully." As a matter of fact, Southey declared, Rose had done more good than the whole gang of reformers had even proposed to do. "The encouragement of the

[1] *Memoirs of John Murray*, 1891, i. 199. The American President was spoken of more civilly by *The Quarterly Review*, April, 1878, in an article on the life and times of President Madison.

benefit societies, the population and poor returns, and the naval schools we owe to G. Rose." But the passages which were either distinctly actionable or likely, if published, to give their author other cause for regret, were those, Southey wrote, relating to Croker; the recommendation for withholding supplies; the mention of Lord Chatham, Lord Riversdale, Fellowes, and Kett; and what was said of the Irish Attorney-General. Southey's letter ended as follows:

"Your prose is as much your own as your poetry. There is a life and vigour in it to which I know no parallel. It has the poignancy of champagne and the body of English October. Neither you nor Murray gave me any hint that the *Commentary* was yours, but I could not look into these pages without knowing that it could not be the work of any other man. God bless you.—R. S."

In the same letter Southey advanced the theory, which sounds oddly enough now, that President Madison was in the pay of Bonaparte. "The American Government," he said, "dream of conquering Canada on the one hand, and Mexico on the other; and happy would Bonaparte be if he could see them doing his work."

Landor's reply was dated March 2, 1812. He perceived, he said, that Mr. Murray was inclined to suppress the *Commentary*; "whether for pay,

or prejudice, or fear, I cannot tell." It had not been advertised among forthcoming books, though Mr. Murray had received it in December. As for Southey's suspicions about Madison, Landor could never believe that the President was in Bonaparte's pay, or that Americans need be paid to resent the indignities and hardships they suffered under our tyrannical maritime laws. The Orders in Council ought to have been revoked. "I pray fervently to God," says Landor, "that no part of America may be desolated; that her wildernesses may be the bowers and arbours of liberty; that the present restrictions on her commerce may have no other effect than to destroy the cursed trafficking and tricking which debases the brood worse than felonies and larcenies; and that nothing may divert their attention from their own immense neighbourhood, or from the determination of helping to set free every town and village of their continent."

A war, Landor went on to say, between England and America would be a civil war; a detestable thing, only to be pardoned when there was some ferocious and perfidious tyrant to be brought to justice. The two peoples spoke the same language. The Americans read *Paradise Lost*. Their children, if not consumed with fire and sword, would indulge their mild and generous affections in the perusal of Southey's *Curse of Kehama*. Surely there

must still be in America many who retained in all their purity the principles which had driven their ancestors from England; and one such family, Landor declared, was worth all the turbulent slaves and nobles in Poland, or all the thoughtless heads devoted for Ferdinand VII. of Spain.

A day or two after he despatched this letter, Landor received from Southey further information about Mr. Murray's attitude. Southey wrote:

"I have a letter this evening from Murray, which I would enclose to you if it were not for the time which would be lost in sending it round for a frank. The sum of it is that it would relieve his mind from some very natural and very unpleasant feelings if you would allow him to procure another publisher for this *Commentary*, into whose hands he will deliver it ready for publication, and with whom he will settle for you. This is purely a matter of feeling and not of fear. He is, on the score of *The Quarterly Review*, under obligations to Canning, and would on that account have refused to publish any personal attack upon him. The manuscript he never read, looking forward to the perusal of the book as a pleasure. What he wishes will be no inconvenience to you, and no doubt you will readily assent to it.

"'I confess,' he says, 'I hesitatingly propose this, for I fear even you could not now speak of this to the author in any way that would not offend him. I will, however, leave it entirely to you; and if you say nothing about it, I will publish

it without any trouble to you or Mr. L., however painful, from my peculiar situation, it will prove to me.' These are his words. For my own part, I should feel any fear of giving you offence as the only thing which could occasion it. It is but for you to signify your assent to Murray in a single line, and the business is settled without any injury to any person's feelings. That it is purely a matter of feeling with him I verily believe. The not reading the manuscript was a compliment to the author, and a mark of confidence in him."

The late Dr. de Noé Walker, who knew Landor well, told me that there were only three men whose remonstrances the irascible genius could always listen to without losing his temper. The amiable Southey was one of them, Dr. Parr was doubtless another, and Francis Hare may have been the third. Southey's letter, just now quoted, produced nothing worse than a threat from Landor that he would borrow £5,000 and start a private printing press, whence could be issued, without the aid or obstruction of publishers, pamphlets which would set the public mind more erect, and throw ministerial factions into the dust. As for the *Commentary* it was condemned, he said, to eternal night. He had just written to Mr. Murray and sent Southey the extract from his letter. This is what he had said :

"Deceived or not deceived, the fault was not mine that you first undertook it yourself, that you

next proposed to find another who would undertake it, and that at last you relapse even from that alternative. I am not surprised that, in these circumstances, you find some vexation. Had you in the beginning pointed out such passages as you considered dangerous to publish (although this very danger would have shown the necessity of them), I would have given them another appearance and stationed them in another place."

To Southey Landor imparted his conviction that Mr. Murray had been persuaded to withdraw from any part in the publication of the *Commentary* "either by Canning or some other scoundrel whom I have piquetted in the work." This ingenious theory is followed by some remarks on the law of libel. Landor had been reading the correspondence of Erasmus. "How infinitely more freedom," he observes, "as well as more learning, was there in those days!" What now was to be desired, he thought, was to adopt the principle *ne quid falsi dicere audeat, ne quid veri non audeat.* In other words, there should be no libel without falsehood. Landor winds up with a hit at the followers of the late Mr. Fox, saying:

"It is delightful to see how the Foxites have disabled themselves from serving the Regent. The people will be able to pay taxes two years more, and these fellows will then excite them to some expression of their discontent; they will force themselves into the places of Government;

they will govern with as much corruption and fraudulence as their predecessors; and as much timber will be wanted for gibbets as for fleets."

To return to the *Commentary*. "Condemned to eternal night" was Landor's own verdict; and but for an accident, the sentence would have been executed. Southey, however, as we have seen, kept a copy of it which passed, after his death, into the hands of Lord Houghton. What that lover of books and excellent critic thought of it we know from his essay on Landor's life and works first published in *The Edinburgh Review*, and reprinted, with additions, in *Monographs*. It contains, he wrote, "perhaps more fair and moderate political and literary judgments, delivered in his own humour, than any work of his earlier or maturer years. It should be reprinted in any new edition of his collected works." Lord Houghton quoted more than one vigorous passage from the *Commentary*, considering that these were not inapplicable to the contests and difficulties of the time when he himself was writing. It is not impossible that the reader may light upon other passages which have their bearing on the questions of our own day.

Landor, when he wrote the *Commentary*, was a man of six and thirty. He was living with his young wife—who was not at all interested either in politics or literature—in the wilds of

Llanthony, his Welsh estate. Already known to men of letters, or to some of them, as the author of *Gebir*, that curious romance of the Hyksos invaders of Egypt, he had also published a volume or two of occasional poetry, much of it in Latin, and at the instigation of Sir Robert Adair and Dr. Parr had contributed political articles to *The Courier*. In 1808, laying aside the pen for the sword, he had gone, well furnished with money, to aid the Spaniards in their struggle against Bonaparte. On reaching Coruña he gave ten thousand *reals* to the cause and, raising a troop of volunteer cavalry, set out to join the Spanish general, Don Joachim Blake.

> When Spain from base oppression rose,
> I foremost rushed against her foes—

he says in one of his poems; but, with the exception of a few skirmishes, he saw no fighting, and returned to England, with the honorary rank of Colonel in the Spanish army, before the close of the year. The adventure must be recalled because it helps to explain some of the references in the *Commentary* to the operations in the Peninsula.

The three years that followed Landor's Spanish campaign were spent at Bath and Llanthony. During this time he wrote *Count Julian: a Tragedy*, spent large sums on projects for developing his

Welsh estate, and married. Early in the spring of 1811 he was at a ball in the Bath Assembly rooms, and, his eye falling on an unknown beauty, he had exclaimed: "By heaven! that's the nicest girl in the room, and I'll marry her." The wedding took place about the end of May,[1] and before the close of the year Landor was at work on the *Commentary*.

Landor's allusions elsewhere to Charles James Fox are not numerous, and the more important ones may be quoted. In his Imaginary Conversation with an English visitor at Florence he represents himself as saying:

"I believe there has rarely been a weaker or a more profligate statesman than Mr. Fox: but he was friendly and affectionate; he was a gentleman and a scholar. When I heard of his decease, and how he had been abandoned at Chiswick by his colleagues in the ministry, one of whom, Lord Grey, he had raised to notice and distinction, I grieved that such indignity should have befallen him. . . . Many were then lamenting him, all who had ever known him personally; for in private life he was so amiable that his political vices seemed to them but weaknesses."

In what he called "Reflections on Athens at the death of Pericles," printed with the first

[1] The register of St. James's Church, Bath, has the following entry: May 24, 1811, Walter Savage Landor to Julia Thuillier, a minor, of Walcot. Witnesses, James Thuillier, Thos: Barrow, Susan Amyatt.

edition of his *Pericles and Aspasia*, Landor said of Fox:

"He was unlucky in all his projects. On one occasion he said he had a peace in his pocket, when he no more had a peace in it than he had a guinea. He was, however, less democratic, less subversive of social order and national dignity, than his rival."

In the letter to *The Examiner*, which has already been referred to, Landor wrote:

"My intimacy with the friends and near relatives of Mr. Fox would certainly have closed my lips against the utterance of the appellation of scoundrel in regard to him. He had more and warmer friends than any statesman upon record: he was the delight of social life, the ornament of domestic. Mr. Fox was a man of genius, and (what in the present day is almost as rare) a gentleman."

An epigram on Fox will be found among Landor's Latin poems.

In reprinting the *Commentary* it has been thought better to break it up into chapters, to provide a few notes, and to expand the extracts from Trotter's *Memoirs* which, though widely read at the time, are now little known. The additions made to the extracts are within brackets; the footnotes, chapter and page headings, table of contents and index are all new. A few corrections in the text have been made from Landor's own list of *errata*. With one or two exceptions his spelling has been followed,

but it seemed an excess of pedantry to repeat such solecisms as *Charlesis*, *Foxis*, *Gustavusis*, for the usual form of the possessive case. A couple of lines in his poem of "Gunlaug and Helena" were thus printed in the earlier editions:

> O! could I loose our blissis bar,
> I burn for wedlock and for war.

In the rare *Simonidea*, where the poem is first found, he appends a note saying:

"I am forced to adopt here the oldest and best form of spelling. In future I shall employ it without force. It is impossible that one *s* following another should make a separate syllable, though it might be the sign of one."

The collected edition of Landor's *Works* referred to in the notes is that brought out by Mr. Forster in 1876.[1] Landor's *Letters addressed to Lord Liverpool on the Preliminaries of Peace*, which are once or twice quoted, were published anonymously in 1814; but the book is not in the British Museum, and I have only met with two copies of it, one of which, with corrections in the author's handwriting, I found among other papers in Landor's writing-desk. Other works cited in the notes will be well known; except, perhaps, a pamphlet entitled: *Circumstantial Details of the Long Illness and Last*

[1] *The Works and Life of Walter Savage Landor*. Chapman & Hall, 1876.

*Moments of the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, together with Strictures on his Public and Private Life, dedicated to Lord Morpeth.* Second edition, 1806.

The collation of the copy of the *Commentary* in Lord Crewe's possession is as follows: Octavo, $5\frac{1}{4}$ by $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Fly-leaf with Lord Houghton s manuscript note on the reverse; short title (with blank reverse), pp. i-ii; title-page (with blank reverse), pp. iii-iv; Dedication, pp. v-xiii; p. xiv is blank; Advertisement, pp. xv, xvi; Preface, pp. i-xxxv; p. xxxvi is blank; Text, pp. 37-227; an unnumbered page of errata and a blank leaf. The imprint at the foot of the page of errata reads: "T. Davison, Lombard Street, Whitefriars, London."

S. W.

# COMMENTARY

ON

# MEMOIRS OF MR. FOX

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LATELY WRITTEN

LONDON

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY

T. DAVISON, LOMBARD STREET, FLEET STREET

AND SOLD BY J. MURRAY, FLEET STREET

1812

# DEDICATION

## THIS COMMENTARY IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

TO THE

## PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES[1]

THE volume, Sir, which I offer to your attention is written by a man who has neither hopes nor fears from any faction in this country; who never served any, who never courted any. In commenting on the *Memoirs* of Mr. Fox, it must refer occasionally to his adversary. It contains such observations as experience would suggest on the conduct of those two statesmen,[2] whose talents a little while since appeared the most conspicuous; but who now, on their barren eminences, serve only to light up a beacon for their countrymen, not to mistake a torrent of eloquence, or a brilliancy of reply, for the characteristics of wisdom and the tests of policy. Unhappily, each of these ministers hath left his party and his advocates

[1] James Madison, fourth President of the United States; elected 1809, re-elected 1813.

[2] William Pitt, the younger, and Charles James Fox.

behind him, and on the system of the one or the other will the government of this kingdom be conducted. Each faction is aware of its errors, yet considers it a just homage to the memory of its prophet to toil through the same wilderness unto their natural termination.

Although the country groans under heavier taxes than the most rapacious invader ever imposed on the conquered; although from this little island, in a period of adverse and of hopeless war,[1] more is confiscated than was extorted by Nero[2] himself, amidst all his prodigalities, from the whole world at peace; yet the partizans of every administration talk of the prudence and successes of their respective leaders. We have a surer criterion. Supposing a country not to be actually, nor to have lately been, in the occupation of an enemy, there is one infallible way of judging whether a ruler rules it well or otherwise. Are the people in abundance? in security? If they are, they are well governed. If they are not, and have not been for several years, and are not likely to be for several years more, then have they been, and are

[1] Speaking of William Pitt, Mr. Lecky says: "Until his death English operations on the Continent present few features except those of extreme costliness and almost uniform failure."—*England in the Eighteenth Century*, v. 347.

[2] "Italy, in the time of Nero, contained, at the lowest calculation, twenty-six millions of inhabitants, and did not pay so much in taxes as the city of London, with its appurtenances, in the late war."—Landor, *Imag. Conv.*, 1826, ii. 157.

too surely, not under a moderate, and equable, and protecting government, but under a cruel, degrading, and ignominious subjection. It is their indefeasible right and bounden duty to destroy it, by withholding all supplies[1] from their taskmasters, and cutting off all resources. Far be every such condition of things from England and America.

I presume to dedicate this book to the wisest and most dignified chief magistrate that presides in the present day over the destinies of a nation, because on his humanity and power, the little freedom that remains among his fellow-creatures now principally depends.

You have witnessed, Sir, how dreadful has been the scourge of war, to countries less deserving and less capable of liberty than America. To bemoan it for the horrors of death and the pangs of separation would be only to raise the animal cry common to our species in all ages; but the wars arising from the French revolution have been wars against all social and liberal principles, all virtues, all conscience. Wherever they have extended no man has a home, no man has a country; old attachments are torn away, new ones are discouraged. Between the government of Napoleon and the British, no people is permitted to regulate its own affairs, to renovate or strengthen its

[1] Southey wanted to omit "the recommendation to withhold supplies."—FORSTER's *Landor*, i. 362.

institutions, to chastise, or correct, or abolish, its abuses. We rivet the chain, he breaks the limb in striking the link asunder.

Your importance, your influence, and, I believe, your wishes, rest entirely on the comforts and happiness of your people. A declaration of hostilities against Great Britain [1] would much and grievously diminish them, however popular it might be in the commencement, however glorious it might be in the result. My apprehension lest this popularity should in any degree sway your counsels is the sole reason by which I am determined in submitting to you these considerations. Popularity in a free state like yours, where places are not exposed to traffic, nor dignities to accident,[2] is a legitimate and noble desire; and the prospects of territory are, to nations growing rich and powerful, what the hopes of progeny are to individuals of rank and fortune. A war between America and England would at all times be a civil war. Our origin, our language, our interests, are the same. Would it not be deplorable, would it not be intolerable to reason and humanity, that the language of a Locke and a Milton should

[1] The American declaration of war against England was signed by President Madison on June 18, 1812.

[2] "Dignities exposed to accident." When the Duke of Richmond, in the House of Lords (June 14, 1779) taunted Thurlow with his low birth, the Chancellor retorted by suggesting that the noble lord was "the accident of an accident."—STANHOPE'S *History of England*, vi. 262.

convey and retort the sentiments of a Bonaparte and a Robespierre? Your merchants have endured much privation and much injury; but their capital has only been thrown back on their own country, and given a fresh vigour to the truest and most practical independence. You have all the requisite materials, and nearly all the requisite hands, for manufacturing whatever you can consume. Nothing but a war can prevent the complete and almost immediate attainment of this object. Consider, Sir, what are the two nations—if I must call them two—which are about, not to terminate, but to extend their animosities by acts of violence and slaughter. If you think as I do—and free men, allowing for the degree of their capacities, generally think alike—you will divide the creatures of the Almighty into three parts: first, men who enjoy the highest perfection of liberty and civilisation; secondly, men who live under the despotism of one person or more, and are not permitted to enjoy their reason for the promotion of their happiness; and thirdly, the brute creation, which is subject also to arbitrary will, and whose happiness their slender power of reasoning (for some power they have) is inadequate to promote. These three classes, in my view of the subject, stand at equal distances. I confess, the utter extinction of the whole Chinese empire, and of every mortal in it, would affect me infinitely less

than the slaughter of a thousand Tyrolese, with the subjugation of the remainder.[1] Because in a series of years the one country would be covered again, like the surface of a pond, with its minute and indistinguishable leaves, as at present, or men more conscious of their dignity would succeed. But the other would impress the rising generation with a memorable and most disheartening example, how futile and vain may be the aspirations of virtue, how sterile may be the love of our country, how triumphant and insuperable may be despotism.

Providence hath ordained you, Sir, not only to preside over the United States, but to watch with vigilance, and to protect with jealousy, the welfare of a whole continent. Indeed, the peace and prosperity of your own people require that all your neighbours should enjoy the same equality of laws, the same freedom from foreign and turbulent and conflicting governments. In the struggle of Spain for independence, it would have been unjust and wicked to have detached from her the Southern colonies. That independence is now impossible,[2] because it is unwished. Instead of aiming her whole force against the usurper,

[1] "I can never be induced to imagine that the extinction of all the tribes in Africa, and all in Asia, with half of the dwellers in Europe, would be so lamentable as the destruction of Missolonghi, or even as the death of Bozzaris."—LANDOR, *Works*, vi. 294.

[2] Chili declared its independence of Spain in 1810. Paraguay rose against the Spanish yoke in the following year.

she has directed great part of it to subdue the spirit of liberty in that hemisphere where alone the spirit of liberty never will be subdued. You have little necessity and little time for deliberation. Terminate the sufferings, confirm the hopes, fulfil the ardent, the incessant wishes of a gallant and grateful people; and never let the repairer of rotten cabinets crush it under the lumber of the Bourbons. If hostilities should be the consequence of this glorious resolution you will have secured to your interests a warlike and powerful and immovable ally on your own borders, and every wise and every free man in all quarters of the world will call heaven to witness the justice of your cause, and pray most devoutly for your success.

## ADVERTISEMENT

THE appearance of this work has been delayed some time by the scruples and remonstrances of the Publisher. Finally, the Author chose rather to cancel much than to alter any thing; he chose, in many instances, rather not deliver his sentiments at all, than to deliver them hesitatingly and ineffectually. For, indeed, what is integrity but wholeness? and how can a writer be said to have spoken the truth, if he hath absconded from any part of it; if he hath exposed and abandoned it to misconstructions, leaving it liable to receive a fresh and different impression from every tide of humour and opinion? To fall short of it is as criminal as to exceed it; and peculiarly and miserably base is it, to be terrified into dumbness by loud outcries or by the peril of laws falling down upon us, from the alleys and by-paths we must go through. At the same time, it is neither wise nor decorous to draw a crowd after us of

> Some in rags, and some in tags,
> And some in *silken gowns*,[1]

to raise a reputation by working on the discomposed passions of the many, or on the weak reasonings of the more.

[1] The old nursery rhyme, beginning: "Hark! hark! the dogs do bark, the beggars are come to town."

# PREFACE

When an author writes on any political subject, he begins by assuring the reader of his impartiality. In presenting to the public my *Commentary* on the *Memoirs* of Mr. Fox, I think it necessary to premise what will probably seem very different from this custom and this object. I would represent his actions to his contemporaries as I believe they will appear to posterity. I would destroy the impression of the book before me, because I am firmly persuaded that its tendency must be pernicious. The author is an amiable man; so was the subject of his memoir. But of all the statesmen who have been concerned in the management of our affairs during a reign the most disastrous in our annals, the example of Mr. Fox, if followed up, would be the most fatal to our interests and our glory. The proofs and illustrations of this assertion will be evident on perusing the *Commentary*. There is no constitutional principle which he has not, at one time, defended, at another time assailed. The

preservation of the King's dominions in Germany, he said, was folly and madness in Mr. Pitt; in his own administration he had the impudence to assert, that Hanover should be as dear to an Englishman as Hampshire.[1] A clear proof to what extent he knew the interests, or consulted the feelings, of Englishmen. Pensions and sinecures were abominations.[2] He kisses the King's hand, and sees his name written out fairly again, above its old erasure,[3] and shuffles into the House to confirm the greatest sinecure of all, and the most flagrant instance of ungenerous cupidity that any red-book in Europe has unfolded. That a man should be made auditor of his own accounts

[1] But it was William Pitt the elder, not Mr. Fox, who said that Hanover ought to be as dear to us as Hampshire. This was one of the "strong expressions" which he used when, in 1757, he brought down to the House a message from George II. asking for aid in the defence of the Electoral dominions, and moved for a grant of £200,000. "One cannot say which was most ridiculous," Horace Walpole wrote, "the richest prince in Europe begging alms for his country, or the great foe of that country becoming its mendicant almoner."—Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.*, ii. 313. See Stanhope, *History of England*, iv. 90.

[2] In the House of Commons, on March 13, 1797, Fox reproached Pitt and Grenville with securing sinecures to themselves, while they were loading the people with taxes.

[3] "On the 9th of May [1798] a Board of Privy Council being held at St. James's, Mr. Faulkner, as Clerk of the Council, presented the list to the King when his Majesty with his own hand drew his pen across the name of Mr. Fox. Mr. Fox, in his private letters, refers to this event with great equanimity. 'I believe,' he says, 'the late Duke of Devonshire is the only instance in this reign of a Privy Councillor being turned out in England.'"—Stanhope's *Pitt* iii. 128. Fox, who had been made a Privy Councillor in March, 1782, was removed in 1798 for having proposed, at a dinner, the toast of "our sovereign, the people." He was reappointed on February 5, 1806.

with the public, and receive a large salary for this auditorship;[1] that, in short, he should be paid a large salary for receiving one, and for doing no earthly thing else, is enough in itself to goad a free people, laden and overburdened with debts, to the precipice of revolution. It is an absurdity so insulting to the understanding, as is not to be paralleled in any book of mysticism. The proposal of it evinces an injustice, a baseness, a dereliction of principle, so brutally bare, obtrusive, and unblushing, that, if there be any honest man among his friends, and endowed with ordinary prudence, let him skulk into the crowd and be well supported by his party, or never cast a stone at Mr. Pitt.

The conduct of the Whig minister[2] in regard to Spanish America proves how wide is the difference between a debater and a statesman, between the versatile suitor of popularity and the true lover of justice. To those who are still

[1] Lord Grenville, having formed the Ministry of all the Talents (February, 1806) in which he was First Lord of the Treasury, was permitted by an Act (46 George III., c. 1) to execute the office of Auditor of the Exchequer by deputy. He had held this sinecure, worth £4,000 a year, since February, 1794. See below, page 53.

[2] That Landor held Fox responsible for the disasters which befell our military adventures in South America is proved by what he says further on (see page 126). The charge, however, is not supported by the facts. It was Windham, and not Fox, who was to blame. "Mr. Windham," Lord Holland wrote, "though he plumed himself on his disdain of all popular clamours, had greatly heated his imagination with the prospect of indemnifying ourselves in the new world for the disappointments which we had sustained in the old."—*Further Memoirs of the Whig Party*, p. 112.

gaping at his prophetic spirit,[1] I would remark, that an ingenious man who takes the opposite side of an argument, when rich and luxurious tradesfolks are *pricked and cockered* into a war, against a revolutionary and military nation, may predict much mischief with much certainty. Mr. Pitt, we are informed, was equally aware of it, but resigned his opinion to preserve his power. Such also is the mechanism of our polity: the commencement of a war will always conciliate to the interests of a minister a very large party of the mercantile and monied, who are ready for loans and contracts; and the aristocracy is brought closer to him by the innumerable posts and employments dependent or consequent on hostilities.

The pleasure of succeeding to this patronage was not to be resisted by a set of people whose poverty alone had made them patriots.[2] The freedom of

[1] Fellowes, in *The Critical Review* for March, 1808, wrote of Fox: "His remonstrances, his exhortations and suggestions, like the predictions of Cassandra, to which they were often compared, were neglected and despised till the time in which they might have been executed had glided away. The history of the [French] revolutionary war will bear testimony to the truth of this observation."

[2] Compare the lines in Landor's *Gebir*:

> Here also those who boasted of their zeal,
> And lov'd their country for the spoils it gave.
>
> Book III., 286, 1st ed.

In the passage that follows, Landor refers to the ill-starred expedition sent to Rio de la Plata, early in 1807, under General Whitelocke. Buenos Ayres had been taken in June, 1806, by Sir Hope Popham and General Beresford. The news reached England in September, and extravagant hopes were excited of founding a British dominion in South America. Whitelocke's expedition, in the early part of 1807, ended in a crushing disaster.

a vast continent, the alliance of a generous people, the various products of a most fertile country, the hopes held out and pledges given by the conquerors, every sentiment of glory, every prospect of advantage, every regard to the honour of those whose intelligence, promptitude, and moderation had secured the territory, must be resigned and abandoned, that tax-gatherers, and excisemen, and commissioners, and notaries, and purveyors, and governors, and deputy-governors, and *lieutenant*-governors and *deputy*-lieutenant governors, might be appointed ;[1] none of them, however unimportant, from the city or the colony, but from the insides and outsides of the gaming-houses in St. James's Street; and that especial care should be taken, not to conciliate our new subjects, but to provide for all sorts and conditions of men the best fitted to exhaust a country. The people did their duty: may all people do the same! They rose, and crushed their oppressors. No inquiry was instituted at home, no culprit was punished, no minister was arraigned. A wretched man, whose tyranny and cowardice were notorious long before, was declared unworthy of command, and this

[1] Speaking in the House of Commons in June, 1807, Canning denounced the late Ministry for their designs in South America. Buenos Ayres, he said, had acquired a vast importance in their eyes, not from its importance to the commerce, or navigation, or to the general resources of the country, "but because it was a place that afforded room for the appointment of collectors, comptrollers, searchers, and tide-waiters."

important discovery was communicated in the *Gazette*.[1]

Thus ended an expedition, sent out under the same auspices as a former one to Quiberon,[2] and another to Ferrol.[3] In one single chapter are recorded the three most disgraceful transactions in British history; and the disgrace is neither in the corruption or the fatuity which occasioned the choice of the commanders, nor in their cowardice and incapacity. These are only the sewers through which it runs. It lies in the basest of all fear: the fear of looking back, the fear of stopping to acknowledge, or advancing

[1] General Whitelocke, on his return from his disastrous expedition to Buenos Ayres (1807), was tried by court martial, cashiered, and declared unfit to serve the King in any capacity. "What Whitelocke did in Buenos Ayres," *The Spectator* said the other day, "should still bring a blush to our cheek."

[2] The reference might be to the expedition of French *Emigrés* to Quiberon in 1795. "Windham, the new War Minister, built his greatest hopes on an expedition of French aristocrats and malcontents to Quiberon Bay; but this force, sumptuously provided with money and munitions of war, and supported by a powerful fleet, was pulverised by Hoche as soon as it landed."—Lord Rosebery's *Pitt*, p. 131. Or was Landor thinking of Sir E. Pellew's attack on Quiberon Bay, June 4, 1800, when some French batteries were destroyed but we could not reduce Fort Penthievre?

[3] A British force under General Sir James Murray Pulteney was sent against Ferrol in August, 1800. The troops landed, but Pulteney thought the place too strong to be taken except by regular siege, and re-embarked them. The naval officers thought the place might easily have been captured. See Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*. "Neither the general nor any person under him knew its fortifications or its garrison. They saw the walls and turned back, although the walls on the side where they landed were incapable of sustaining one discharge of artillery, and the garrison consisted of half a regiment.' —*Works*, vi. 24.

to interrogate. When calamities come down so thick together; when merely the vile instrument is broken and cast off, not the workman dismissed for choosing and employing it; when a general is rewarded by appointing him minister of war,[1] for no other services than flying from an invalid garrison and dismantled fortress, what hope is there of any thing prosperous, until the elements of a state produce a change of season? I am afraid it is only by severe and stormy weather that such a pestilence can be stopped.

One party can accuse the other with equal justice. Such being the case, no culprit of rank and connections, no officer so high that his criminality can involve our safety and our honour, will be punished by any thing more severe than verbal censure. Really it is ridiculous to talk of disgracing, for instance, a man[2] who has had the baseness to praise a naval officer to the people and to malign him to the sovereign; whose folly and that of his defenders is so signal that nothing but the hand of Providence could have stamped

[1] Sir James Murray Pulteney became Secretary at War in 1807.

[2] A reference to General Lord Chatham, who commanded the troops in the ill-fated expedition to Walcheren, 1809. On February 14, 1810, Lord Chatham "delivered clandestinely to the King a paper justifying himself and in some degree inculpating the Navy and even the Admiralty."—Lord Holland's *Further Memoirs of the Whig Party*, p. 33. The matter was referred to in the House of Lords five days later. Landor's verses on Walcheren will be found in his *Works*, viii. 43.

it, nothing but the power of divine indignation and justice could have driven them to the exposure of his documents. If any such person is known to exist at this moment, and not to be out of favour, where favour is, or ought to be, a reward for active and transcendent virtues, I need make no apology for the force of my expressions. No name is mentioned; I disclaim all reference, all allusion. If the stigma flies forth against any, it must be by its own peculiar aptitude and attraction. According to the reports which are prevalent, and which I would rather refute than repeat, the quarters of a brave and active officer were taken from him, he was cast out to die amongst the pestilential marshes, that the *state turtles* of this glutton might have a commodious kitchen! He was not to be disturbed, or spoken to, or called on, until several hours after noon; he was not to be seen while he was dressing; he was not to be intruded on at his breakfast; he was not to be molested at his dinner; he was not to be hurried at his wine; he was not to be awakened at his needful and hardly earned repose.[1]

Commodus and Elagabalus! Ye lived amongst

[1] See Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*: "Of our generals, the most distinguished then employed was a body that rose from bed after midday, of which when orders were requested, the first answer was, *His lordship is at breakfast;* the second, *His lordship is at lunch;* the third, *His lordship is at dinner.*"—*Imag. Conv.* 1824, i. 141. This passage was afterwards transferred to another conversation, when the

a coarse, reviling people! Your memories have been followed up, and hooted at, most indecorously; *we* are taught better manners; we see such actions as yours, and hold our peace! But I should be more contented, I must acknowledge it, if I could discover in history where any people hath been so fortunate as to survive such delinquency in the higher officers of state; if I could find that nation in existence twenty years after such politicians and such polity. This idea of degradation and ruin stands so closely and so awfully before me, I lose for a moment all view of that vast colossus[2] which overshadows the whole continent of Europe, and which will never be considered as the cause, however he may be the instrument, of our subjugation. If we had only the weakest enemy, in addition to such corruption at home, such oppression of taxes on the intermediate ranks, such proscription of talents on the one side, such prostitution on the other, and such utter exclusion of all dissidents in religion, when the national church is in a deplorable minority, our ruin would be equally certain, though somewhat longer delayed.

last answer became, "His lordship is dead drunk" (*Works*, 1876, vi. 248). Lord Holland said of the general: "His indolence in office had . . . become so notorious that he was nicknamed in the navy the late Lord Chatham."—*Further Memoirs*, p. 32.

[2] Landor makes Pitt say: "I have failed in every thing I undertook, and have cast in solid gold the clay colossus of France."—*Works*, iii. 188.

With what contempt have we often spoken of the Turks![1] yet the counsels of this people seem to be more systematic than ours, amidst all their troubles and revolutions. Their defects have been fewer and less calamitous, and, fanatics and miscreants as they are, their toleration has been less circumscribed by bigotry. And yet the nation whose sacred rights they think it necessary to qualify, is open to the descents and insinuations of a powerful and triumphant enemy. Let us not deceive ourselves, and fancy we are rich, and mighty, and unassailable, because we can still raise money; our methods of raising money are certain signs of our necessities, and the power of raising it is no proof of any power beyond. Nations have trampled down their oppressors without coin and without credit. Those who are angry that this country, in which there are such splendid dinners and crowded drawing-rooms, should be compared with Turkey, must be reminded that pleasure and wit are but fallacious symbols of eternity to a state.

The guests of Pompey, in his rich pavilion at Pharsalia, looked down with disdain on Cæsar the last evening of their lives. But posterity is just, even among the most vulgar and illiterate. A

[1] "The only people of whom he [Landor] writes with constant respect are the Turks: 'coming from Turkey to France was like passing from lions to lap-dogs: they alone of all nations have known how to manage the two only real means of happiness, energy and repose.'"—Lord Houghton in *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1869, p. 244.

little dog is universally called Pompey; a great dog, Cæsar. We despise the character of Pompey, in despite of some virtues; we admire the character of Cæsar, in despite of many vices. Such an effect hath superior energy on the soul of man. Nature not only permits us, but commands us, to reverence it, even when its direction is sinister to our happiness. It is not from the traditionary verbiage of pedagogues, who hate and love, despise and admire, by prescription, that we feel animated at the achievements of heroes. It is from the intuitive and certain knowledge of our hearts, that there is a conservate power within us, against corruption and against violence; and that nothing good or glorious is impossible to those whose strength and spirit are bent resolutely on the exploit. Even bad men are viewed differently from other bad men, by a force of mind. In Bonaparte, it is evident that anger and a jealousy allied to fear, are the predominant passions; while the fire-side inmates of his heart, if I may venture on the expression, are cruelty and fraud—sure progeny of such parents. No vices can be imagined more hateful. But he never deserts his allies, he never abandons his object; he bestows no rewards on the idle, he shelters no coward from punishment. If he is censurable, it is in the opposite extreme: not only does he raise up merit whenever he discovers it, but with a spirit which might be

called enthusiasm, if so revolutionary a conduct can be spoken of so equivocally, he values it quite as highly in the living as in the remotest of their ancestors. By these means he has established his own empire, and subverted others, which he never could have done had his competitors adopted the same. By the providence of God we have avoided one vast mischief: we have not much extended our dominions. To pave the road to conquests, and to erect the outworks necessary for retaining them, would consume almost all that is left to us from the fragments of the constitution.

Although there may be some people so ignorant and stupid as to believe that every act of coercion is a proof of energy, and every enforcement of an obsolete law a preservative of the rest, even those men must be aware, from their own personal feelings, that the less we expose of what is vulnerable, the more is our bosom at peace. The Romans, the Macedonians, and the French sunk under despotism by their conquests; and he who added most to the dominions of each country added most to its subjugation. Every free people, if it is wise and powerful, will deprecate an accession of territory. In a state of successful war the prince acquires new powers, bestows new offices, conciliates new interests. Those who were under him from their early days waste away in freedom as he ascends in glory; but in a nation whose laws are

unequal, each individual is relieved a little in proportion as the dominions of the state extend.

Hence a tyrant becomes more popular for war, although its expenditure, even when successful, adds other privations to those of liberty. The French lately were free, as much as any people so light and ignorant can ever be. Two men of transcendent abilities, Cambacérès and Talleyrand, men unrestrained by any sense of religion or any principle of morality, have instructed a soldier of fortune how to govern and keep that people in subjection. Under his vast encampment—such is France—these harpies devour the prey they have collected, with incessant clamours against Englishmen, as foreigners who have rashly drawn the sword, and invaded them during the festival of the Continent. To become the companions of a conqueror is enough to remove the disgrace of subjugation. Whether this be the opinion of philosophers I cannot tell, nor whether it be a point of speculation with those who deprecate any violence of speech, or action, against the emperor. I believe that, mingled with fear and treachery, it finds a place even there; but certain I am that it is the prevailing sentiment of those who have overturned old empires and established new; that it is the universal maxim of ardent minds, and the military creed of revolutionary Europe. Woe betide the government that forces men to deliberate

whether it be the more disgraceful to admit a new dynasty, with economy and peace, or to support an old establishment in irremediable corruption and in hopeless war. If ever the time should arrive when the English must pay heavier taxes, without attaining any proposed object, than that object, if attained, would be worth; if nineteen in twenty should be so reduced in circumstances that they cannot give their children the same advantages of education and of business as they themselves enjoyed; it will be then a duty to remove, by every effort and at every peril, the causes, whatsoever they may be, of so serious and mournful a calamity. It will be their object and determination to render it impossible for those who have brought about such an evil to compass any more, or even to make any attempt, however peaceable, for the recovery of their possessions. Committees will then be holden to decide on what has been merited by public services, and to receive back again what has been taken under false pretences.

A people conscious of its strength and dignity will always be generous and mild: even the French were not very ferocious, until they were scourged and maddened by their wars. The idea of vengeance has been too long associated with the idea of retribution. England has wanted a Cromwell and a Nassau; she never has wanted

a Robespierre or a Bonaparte. On the other hand, never, since the extinction of the Tudors, has she betrayed so much indifference to public virtue, or such proneness to the most ignominious of all subjection. The case proposed by Montesquieu is no longer hypothetical: the *if ever* is blotted from the problem.

The Cumæans, it is said, had not the common sense to know that they possessed the right of standing under their own porticos when it rained; but, probably, in some very foul weather, they took shelter under the most ample and most protecting. Open tyranny is not the greatest of all evils. It is better to contend against any thing, however inhuman and monstrous it may be, possessing force, however great, let it only be visible and definite in every limb and motion, than to be drawn under in the fat folds of some overwhelming hydra, and to be sucked away insensibly at its leisure.

We have been, I shall not say at what period, in a situation analogous to this, and yet we have addressed one another in high language. But words of encouragement, too often repeated, are words of bad omen. Far be it from me to lower the spirit or to damp the hopes of the public. I foretold, but it was in private, that Fox would be aconite where Pitt was wormwood. The disasters of the country began with this heaven-

born minister;[1] happy were England had they terminated with his heroic brother. The last of these Dioscuri, by appearing on his war-horse at the gate, gave warning to the wiser that the house of their revels was about to fall. We have been sitting like condemned criminals: the poison has now deadened all the extremities, and is mounting to the heart. Both parties have inveighed with equal vehemence against the inequality and insufficiency of our representative system; both projected, and both abandoned, the project of reform. No person mixes in general society so little as I do; no man has kept himself so totally detached from all factions; yet I seldom meet a person, whether on business or amusement, whether a stranger or acquaintance, whose conversation does not immediately turn on the calamities and disgraces we have suffered, and does not generally end with the confession of an equal insufficiency, in all who have been members of the cabinet.

In the beginning of the French revolution, when the minds of men were heated by the rapidity and importance of events, and when friendships

[1] Mr. Gladstone, referring to the designation of Pitt as the "heaven-born minister," said in the House of Commons: "I have understood that that name came from the city of London at the time when Pitt embarked this country in the unhappy policy of meeting the expenditure of a revolutionary war, even from the first, by loan."

According to Leigh Hunt, the Duke of Chandos, when Master of the Horse, first applied the famous epithet to Pitt, "which occasioned some raillery."—Leigh Hunt's *Recollections of Byron*, etc., ii. 67.

were torn asunder by new and violent attractions there still remained a delicacy of sentiment, and a reluctance to touch that train which was liable to such tremendous explosions.[1] At present there is one common cause, and one universal opinion. The leading men have been tried. The glebe is effete; the plough and harrow must go deeper; something new must be turned up; but on the same ground, and within the same inclosures. We want fresh seed, and weightier, and sounder.

If ever there was a time when a revolution would be disastrous, it is now; if ever there was one when it seemed inevitable, now is it.[2] What are the signs and tokens of this awful visitation? Are they not suspended in the heavens, glaringly visible, at the present hour? Insolence and injustice, imposture and self-sufficiency; a prostration of public virtue, an eye closed against inevitable misfortune, an ear deaf to the most earnest prayers of those who could profit but *generally* by their advice, and a countenance which never changes at the most irrefragable reproaches, and the most deep disgrace. What can be expected

[1] Landor, in one of his letters, says that *Gebir* was "written in the last century, when our young English heads were turned towards the French Revolution, and were deluded by a phantom of Liberty, as if the French could ever be free, or let others be."—Landor's *Letters*, etc., 1897, p. 135.

[2] "This country," so wrote Southey, May 14, 1812, "is upon the brink of the most dreadful of all conceivable states—an insurrection of the poor against the rich."—*Life of Southey*, p. 282.

from men who study not to be upright and diligent in their offices, but merely con over some petty cavil at their predecessors, and stoop to ascertain, that they may reach, without exceeding, the limits of *their* iniquity? Is there any one who has not been disgusted, and who would not have been indignant formerly, when the higher and more manly feelings had all their painful play, at the recriminations of the opposite ministers? Virtue and truth lose their characteristic loveliness when the veil is ript away by such hands. When a Canning or a Castlereagh tells us, with abhorrence, of a reversion or a sinecure given to some abandoned gambler, by the patron of his club, we are indeed indignant, but not to our natural pitch: the sentiment flies off in splinters, some on the giver, some on the receiver, most on the accuser. We have heard of family and of birth in parliament; but, if a nation is ruined, of what importance is it whether it be ruined by a man of yesterday or by a man of the day before? The difference is no greater, to those who survey the newest, and the most ancient, at an equal elevation above both.

To saunter with complacency, or with indifference, by the channels of corruption, is not virtue. It is only the Asiatic despot who is never to be awakened from his slumber, when treachery is

lurking in his courts, and enemies are thundering at his gates. Such images were poetry and fable to our ancestors: no phantasmagoria could bring them to their bosoms. Yet virtuous men are inert and passive now. Speak to them of corruption, they do not blush to tell you it is necessary; government could not go on without it; we are not what we were; should we not ourselves like a place? "Yes," I answer, "and the time is approaching when every man will have his own; but I would conjure you to withhold from me, and from all whom I deem estimable, the sure means of becoming worse men."

I consider the amalgam of rottenness and soundness as a much greater curse than all the poverty and distress arising from ministerial profusion. There is infinitely more misery in the world from wickedness than from want; but they are two gamesters that play into each other's hand. If the higher classes hold out a glaring example of rapacity, they will meet either with vengeance or with imitation from those who walk below. Whichever may happen, the country is the sufferer. We have contemplated such enormities of crime and such anomalies of law[1] as

[1] As late as 1823 Sir James Mackintosh, in moving a resolution on the "barbarous criminal laws," said: "We had two hundred laws inflicting capital punishment in our Statute-book, and yet never acted on more than twenty of them." See also Landor's imaginary conversation between the Grand Duke Leopold and President Du Paty

never were seen before in any land where the images of liberty and justice, or even the naked walls of a constitution, were left standing. If an unfortunate mother, at a distance from home, carrying with her a half-starved infant, along roads covered with snow, should snatch a shirt from a hedge to protect it from a miserable death, she is condemned to die. That she never could have known the law, that she never could have assented to its equity, avails her nothing; that she was pierced by the cries of her own offspring; that it was not merely the instigation of want, but the force of omnipotent nature, the very voice of God himself, the preservation of a human being, of her own, the cause of her wandering, and her wretchedness, of her captivity and her chains: what are these in opposition to an act of parliament? She dies. Look on the other side. A nobleman of most acute judgment,[1] well versed in all the usages of his country, rich, powerful,

(*Works*, iii. 51). In another conversation he makes Sir Samuel Romilly say: "I am ready to believe that Draco himself did not punish so many [offences] with blood as we do, though he punished with blood every one indiscriminately."—*Works*, iii. 163.

[1] Henry Dundas, Lord Melville, for a long time Lord Privy Seal for Scotland and President of the Board of Control for India. In 1785 he had carried a Bill to prevent the Treasurer of the Navy appropriating public moneys to his private use, and in 1806 he was himself impeached, but acquitted, on a charge of misappropriation. Landor attacked him both in prose and verse. In the *Apology for Satire* (*Poems*, 1795) he says:

"Invidious gods! Why boasts the brave Dundas
A heart of iron and a face of brass?"

See also the epigram in Landor's *Works*, viii. 124.

commanding, with a sway more absolute and unresisted than any of its ancient monarchs, the whole kingdom in which he was a subject, with all its boroughs, and its shires, and its courts, and its universities, and, in addition, as merely a fief, the empire of all India; who possessed more lucrative patronage than all the crowned heads in Europe.

Let this illustrious character, to whom so many men of rank looked up as their protector, and whom senators and statesmen acknowledged as their guide; let this distinguished member of the British parliament break suddenly through the law which he himself had brought into the House for the conservation of our property, without necessity, without urgency, without temptation—and behold the consequence. True, he is impeached, but all the evidence of his guilt he is permitted to withhold, by a special decision in his favour, and the answers he returns to those who are authorised to examine him are evasive and jocose. One honest man, Admiral Nichols,[1] Controller of the Navy, scandalised at such scenes of iniquity, hopeless of reforming them, and disdaining to sanction by his name and presence the belief that a single act of fraud and peculation

[1] Landor refers elsewhere to the conduct of Admiral Nichols: "Finding no support, he threw up his office as Controller of the Navy, and never afterwards entered the House of Commons."—*Works*, iv. 429. In the same conversation the Admiral is described as "a just, a valiant, and a memorable man" (*Ib.* p. 427).

had been examined as it should be, threw up his office instantaneously and retired from such unworthy associates.

He resigned his place for no other reason than because he was most fit for it, and for the same reason I have often wondered how he ever came to occupy it. Men are in governments what words are in eloquence; their position, their relation, and their intrinsic qualities must be considered. He who, with a fair-flowing wig, might appear a respectable special pleader,[1] may be incapable of coping with the impetuous and versatile Bonaparte; he who understands the merit of a turtle and the duties of a toast-master may be unsuccessful in his attacks both on his enemies and his comrades; those who write ingenious and sharp satires may hope to arrive at the glory of pretty smart duellists, may even be

[1] The wearer of the "fair flowing wig" was Spencer Perceval; the expert in turtles, General Lord Chatham; the writer of sharp satires and promising duellist, Canning. See Sydney Smith, in *Peter Plymley*: "You tell me I am a party man. I hope I shall always be so when I see my country in the hands of a pert London joker [Canning] and a second-rate lawyer [Perceval]. Of the first, no other good is known than that he makes pretty Latin verses; the second seems to me to have the head of a country parson and the tongue of an Old Bailey lawyer."—S. SMITH'S *Works*, 1850, p. 491.

Landor, who disliked Canning, refers to his ignorance of French and to his duel with Castlereagh in the verses beginning:

> "Canning, in English and in Latin strong,
> Was quite an infant in each other tongue.
> Proud, yet an easy embassy he sought
> From the kind comrade he traduced and fought."
>
> *Dry Sticks*, p. 147.

taught dancing and french, however late; but they have yet to be informed that the arrangement of a campaign is different from the construction of a pentameter.

I never shall think it presumptuous to offer such advice and such warning as men of reflection are able to derive, and authorised to deliver, from the experience of past ages. Those who are ignorant whence arises the utility of history cannot be supposed to be perfectly well informed whence arises the pleasure it bestows. Believe me, it is not a series of sieges and battles, of dangers and escapes, of turns and reverses of fortune, by which we are delighted: it is because for the moment we fancy we have acquired so much wisdom as would direct us in similar situations; it is a consciousness of knowledge and a confidence of security. The mind is captivated by these impressions, and proceeds without further inquiry. No two human beings ever profited less by them than Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox.

In the beginning of the war, the minister had two objects: to preserve the balance of Europe, and to maintain the constitution of the realm. The idea of the balance of Europe was taken from the states of Italy, but it is proper and requisite to have a correct notion how it was managed. "Questi potentati avenano ad avere due cure principali: l'una, che un forestiero non entrasse in

Italia con armi; l'altra che nessuno di loro occupasse più stato."[1] Such are the words of Machiavelli. At the commencement of the French revolution, all the more extensive states of Europe seemed ready to resolve themselves into their component parts. The conjunctures of this period seemed to portend that what we had been waging so many wars to bring about would be accomplished by its own conflicting elements. The conceptions of the great disposer were swelling into full maturity. The minister of the day laboured himself into blindness[2] by striving to undo what he would, if he could have seen one inch before him, have considered his highest glory, and his most permanent blessing, to have achieved. The spirit of liberty was abroad, and the sound of it was tremendous when it flashed into those quarters where there was none. If Mr. Pitt found it or made it requisite to coerce the new opinions, it was his policy to keep a formidable force within the realm, surely not to send it out. It would also have been in readiness, and without exciting any previous suspicion, to take advantage of whatever calamity might befall the infant republic. Pur-

[1] Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, cap. xi. Elsewhere Landor gives the English: "Machiavelli, in speaking of the Italian league says, 'These potentates had two principal views: one that no foreigner should enter Italy in arms; the other, that none of the princes or states should attempt an increase of territory.'"—*Letters to Lord Liverpool*, p. 64.

[2] Landor may be referring to Lord North, whose sight, however, began to fail in 1787, and who soon afterwards became totally blind.

suing quite a different plan, he succeeded in nothing but in preventing the demolition of the French monarchy, which, under another and more formidable dynasty, has swallowed up all the rest.

The balance of Europe would have been settled to the full satisfaction of its most romantic admirers if we never had entered into a continental war, for it is certain that the Netherlands would have thrown off the yoke both of Austria and of France. This one event would have preserved the balance; no other could. But a court war was necessary to create that danger in the midst of which all clamours for reform were to be stifled. A sense of common danger united all parties in France, who now began to see clearly that the dismemberment of their country was intended. Valenciennes[1] was taken in the name of the emperor of Germany, and the West Indian islands[2] were surrendered to

[1] After a siege lasting nearly four weeks, the Duke of York, on July 26, 1793, took possession of Valenciennes on behalf, not of the French royal family, but of the Emperor. See Fox's speech in the House of Commons, March 24, 1795: "When we took Valenciennes, instead of taking it for Louis XVII., we took possession of it in the name of the Emperor Francis. When Condé surrendered, we did the same thing. . . . Was it possible for any man to be so ignorant as to doubt what our intentions were? How, then, was it possible to suppose that our conduct would produce on the inhabitants of France an effect different from what it has done?"

[2] Fox said, in the speech quoted in the last note: "When Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis took Martinique, Guadaloupe, and the rest of the French West India islands, did they take possession of them for Louis XVII.? No! but for the King of Great Britain, not to be restored to France when monarchy and regular government should be restored, but to be retained as conquests if the chance of war should leave them in our hands."

the king of Great Britain. The principles laid down in our Bill of Rights were disclaimed and reprobated, and it was understood universally throughout Europe that England was hostile to every people which might assert its ancient freedom. Sceptres and crowns were soon trodden into the dust, and we had nothing else in any country on our side. Hence the preponderating power continued so, in our despite and its own. The present state of Europe was fixt and settled, though ignorance and prejudice concealed it from our eyes, at the moment we declared hostilities. At that instant the Destinies shook over Europe the imperial mantle, and held up the iron crown. Anarchy might have split France into fragments. We warred against this only sure ally, and established the military despotism we have ever since been struggling to overthrow. Not a movement of ours but fixes it more firmly; not a shilling we expend in other countries but goes ultimately to its support. If our military and naval forces were appointed to exert all their energies in conjunction it might, and I believe it would, be otherwise.

Let us now look at home; let us look at the constitution; but, first, would it not be wiser to look *for* it? Surely it is the interest of the present ministry to abandon the old rotten system. They are supported by the people, because they are

thought more honest than their predecessors. They are also more intelligent, more vigilant, more active. How little is wanting to establish their power! The regent sees clearly that they alone can serve him: how gladly would the nation co-operate in confirming this favourable impression! No administration ever had such general support. It needs not to disburse the wages of iniquity: the crutch of a former premier may be the cross of Mr. Perceval. People are ready to pay their last farthing for the war against Napoleon; but if they see it granted in pensions and sinecures, they will reserve their arms, at least, for a vengeance more practicable and more deep. What the constitution now is may be doubtful; but every man pretends he can tell you what is injustice, what is oppression, what is peculation, what is defeat, what is indigence, what are inquisitorial taxes, and discretionary power. Many of these expressions would indeed have puzzled his father, but education of late years has been prodigiously improved. It requires a longer and more profound study to read, mark, learn, and *inwardly digest*, the voluminous folios of our late assessments, under the assiduous tutorage of the most acute tax-gatherer, than was required not long ago to obtain all the degrees of an university.

I do, from my heart, wish and desire the permanence of the present ministry, but it is only

by justice that it can be permanent. If the clue of those measures which they are now pursuing in Ireland were traced to its utmost extent, it would lead us through a labyrinth of defilement so dark and horrible that, even with broad daylight before us, we should almost doubt the practicability of escape. Of what consequence is it to us if the Irish choose to worship a cow or a potatoe? Is there any danger that the purity of our religion should be contaminated by it, or that the purity of our parliament should be sullied by their admission? If all the members returned were Catholics, still what harm could they do? But the supposition is quite gratuitous, for it is certain that many, and probable that the greater part, would be protestants. What we hear of their discontent and turbulence is fundamentally true, but much exaggerated. Their writers are not remarkable for sobriety of discussion, and they consider the *αυξησις* as the principal embellishment of style. We may attribute something to bad humour, and something to bad taste. A history of the present times should not be written in that country. Where indeed should it? This is not the period, nor is this the world, where genius can exist without passion and without sympathy.

# COMMENTARY ON "MEMOIRS OF MR. FOX"

## CHAPTER I

### A GEORGIAN STATESMAN

Fox and his time—Corruption in Parliament—Pitt and the peerage—George III. and dukedoms—Fox's *History of James II.*—Dryden's prose and verse—Heroic poetry—Pope's invention—Fox as a letter-writer—Place-hunters—Three in a bed—Coalition ministries—Fox's French proclivities—Only right when Pitt wrong.

["I KNEW Mr. Fox, however, at a period when his glories began to brighten—when a philosophical and noble determination had, for a considerable time, induced him to renounce the captivating allurements and amusements of fashionable life—and when, resigning himself to rural pleasures, domestic retirement, and literary pursuits, he became a new man, or rather, more justly may I say, he returned to the solid enjoyment of a tranquil, yet refined, rural life, from which he had been awhile withdrawn, but had never been alienated."—TROTTER's *Memoirs*, preface, viii.]

*Page* viii.—"At a period when his glories began to brighten." It was rather late in life for the glories of a politician to *begin* to brighten.

*Page* ix.—"It must be granted, too, that a commercial and luxurious nation, however great,

is less favourable to *the production* of so extraordinary a character as that of Mr. Fox, than one in which simplicity and disinterestedness would be the prevailing features."[1]

Mr. Fox bore about him, until he advanced in years, all the characteristics of an age the most corrupt and profligate. One of simplicity and disinterestedness is not perhaps that in which a truly great man shines most conspicuously. Cato and Brutus, who were more disinterested characters, though not greater than Cæsar, lived in an age of impurity and corruption.[2] Hampden, Hutchinson, Ludlow, Algernon Sydney, Milton, lived in the most disgraceful days of England. They are, like the lightning of heaven, more visible and awful through the surrounding darkness. In the times of the Curii and Camilli, Mr. Fox would have been a prodigy of abomination. In those of Charles II. he would have appeared one of the brightest and best courtiers. He came forward into life with every advantage, and the age was neither too light nor too dark a background for the clear and steady exhibition of his features. He found no fault in

[1] Trotter adds: "The powerful weight of mercantile interests in the councils of the English people, is decidedly adverse to the germination, expansion, and glory of genius."

[2] Landor, in the *Pentameron*, makes Petrarca say: "We are reluctant to admit that the most wretched days of ancient Rome were the days of her most illustrious men; that they began amid the triumphs of Scipio, when the Gracchi perished, and reached the worst under the dictatorship of Cæsar, when perished Liberty herself."—*Works*, iii. 494.

the luxuries of this nation, and was deeply imbued with that portion of its commercial spirit which exacts no industry, and pays no tax — the aristocratical commerce of the gaming-table.

*Page* xi.—"[Demosthenes had the great advantage of speaking to a large and independent popular assembly.] Fox spoke to an assembly of too aristocratic, as well as commercial, a cast," etc.[1]

The qualities are opposite. Both could not *preponderate*. In fact, there was very little of what suits our notions of aristocracy. Brothers and sons of noblemen were in the House of Commons, but these had no aristocratical views or opinions. They sat and rose only for places and for pensions: their very *seats* were commercial. It is only an extremely small part of the English nobility itself that can be called the aristocracy. Pitt, who despised, or perhaps hated it, made it a complete miscellany of fugitive pieces.[2] Whoever chose to

[1] "To expect," Trotter adds, "the same effects from his eloquence."

[2] Elsewhere Landor says of W. Pitt: "Jealous of power and distrustful of the people that raised him to it, he enriches and attaches to him the commercial part of the nation by the most wasteful prodigality both in finance and war, and he loosens from the landed the chief proprietors by raising them to the peerage"—*Works*, iv. 266. See also the conversation between Pitt and Canning, where Pitt is made to say: "I hate and always hated these [the ancient aristocracy]. I do not mean the rich: they served me. I mean the old houses: they overshadowed me"—*Works*, iii. 187. Sheridan, in the House of Commons, about April, 1792, said: "Sixty or seventy peerages had been created under the present administration [Pitt's] for no distinguished abilities, for no public services, but merely for their interest in returning members to Parliament."

desert the cause of the people in the lower house, was cut out for the upper. He treated the lords as Julius Cæsar treated the senate at Rome.[1] At last the King thought proper to keep a sort of side-chapel for a sanctuary, and separated the ducal dignity from the rest.[2] In honour and consideration it was no longer a house of peers. The people, in turning the new ones into ridicule, lost by degrees a part of their respect for the more ancient; and the French revolution found nothing but their reason, a feeble barrier among the vulgar, to oppose. All their salutary prejudices were rooted out; the more acrimonious were left.

*Page* xii.—"[Although he (Fox) distinctly saw the ruin preparing by a rash and obstinate minister (Pitt), for his country,] no expression of bitterness ever escaped his lips. The name of that minister," etc.[3]

No more than against his opponents at cards. If he lost to-night, he might win to-morrow.

*Page* xiv.—["Lord Holland, in his preface to Mr. Fox's Historical Fragment,[4] has dwelt too

[1] "Cæsar with a senate at his heels."—POPE, *Essay on Man*, iv. 258.

[2] In November, 1789, Pitt asked for a dukedom for the Marquis of Buckingham. "The King, however, refused. He had no objection to create marquises and earls, but he had determined to reserve the rank of duke for the royal family."—STANHOPE's *Pitt*, ii. 41.

[3] "The name," Trotter says, "of that minister (William Pitt), was rarely, if at all, noticed by him, and never with acrimony."

[4] *A History of the Early Part of the Reign of James the Second*, by the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, London, 1808. Lord Holland, who

much upon his uncle's solicitude as to historical composition. Mr. Fox doubtless felt anxious to keep it distinct, as he ought, from oratorical delivery; but I am inclined to think that historic matter flowed from him as his despatches did, with facility and promptness. His manuscript of the Fragment, of which a good part is in his own handwriting, has but very few corrections or alterations; and his great anxiety (and very justly) appears to me to have regarded facts, rather than style."]

"Historical Fragment, etc." What shall we think of a man's judgment, who, in writing a history, had resolved to employ no other words than a poet had employed in his verses, prefaces, and dedications? Dryden,[1] of whom I speak, has written on hardly any subject but poetry, and only a part of his writings was known to Mr. Fox: the rest has been published since, and is of little value. Of his poems, a part seems to have been composed in a brothel, the remainder in a gin-shop. His prose is vigorous and natural. Those who call him a copious writer would never have called him so had he not been a careless one. In fact, he uses any word that comes first. He had engaged with

edited the volume, says of his uncle: "Though he frequently commended both Hume and Blackstone's style, and always spoke of Middleton's with admiration, he assured me that he would admit no word into his book for which he had not the authority of Dryden." Preface, xl.

[1] Of Dryden, Landor says, elsewhere: "*Alexander's Feast* smells of gin at second hand, with true Briton fiddlers full of native talent in the orchestra."—*Works*, iv. 502.

a bookseller to furnish so much;[1] and he made no effort but to guard against

> Immitis rupta tyranni
> Fœdera.[2]

He is never affected: he had not time for dress. There is no obscurity, no redundancy; but in every composition, in poetry or prose, a strength and spirit purely English, neither broken by labour nor by refinement. Still, he is not what Mr. Fox and others have called him, a great poet: for there is not throughout his works one stroke of the sublime or one touch of the pathetic, which are the only true and adequate criteria; nor is there that just description of manners in his dramas, which is very important, though secondary. For these reasons, he will never be considered by good judges as equal to Otway, to Chatterton, to Burns, or even to Cowper. He was at repose, and free from all those trifling and pretty inventions which many have considered as indications and proofs of the truly poetical mind. There is a species of these which imposes alike on the undisciplined and scholastic. I mean the invention, or rather, the modification of machinery. People of an ordinary cast in the republic of letters grow no less wèary at hearing of just taste, than the vulgar in Athens were at hear-

[1] Dryden's connection with Jacob Tonson lasted from 1769 till his death. Coleridge talked of "Dryden's slovenly verses written for the trade."—H. C. Robinson's *Diary*, ii. 58.

[2] Virgil, *Georgics*, iv. 492.

ing of Aristides the just. When our heroic verse was perfected, as it was by Dryden, and others had employed it with success, something new was demanded. Poems then began to contain as much imagery as toy-shops do, and about as valuable. *The Rape of the Lock* was admired, not for its easy and light touches of humour, but for what was called the *invention* of Pope, his application of the machinery. It was not perceived nor suspected, that there is more real invention in the *Epistle of Eloise to Abelard*, although so much is copied from the original. Warton[1] was unable to trace it in the discovery, the arrangement, the concentration of what is scattered by passion, in the poet's fine tact developing that idiosyncrasy which is peculiar to one person in one situation, and his power of enforcing those appeals which reach in a moment every heart alike. There was nothing of this in Dryden, nor is there anything which could be very useful to Mr. Fox. He certainly left behind him no treasury of expressions which contained anything convertible to the purposes of an historian.

[1] Speaking of *The Rape of the Lock*, Dr. Joseph Warton says: "The insertion of the machinery of the sylphs in proper places, without the least appearance of its being awkwardly stitched in, is one of the happiest effects of judgment and art."—*Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, 3rd ed., p. 225. As every one knows, Addison had discouraged Pope from inserting the machinery (*Ib.* p. 160).

When he comes to the *Eloise and Abelard*, Warton says: "Pope was a most excellent *improver*, if no great original *inventor*. . . . How finely he has worked up the hints of distress that are scattered up and down in Abelard's and Eloisa's Letters, and in a little French history of their lives and misfortunes."—*Essay on Pope*, p. 309.

*Page* xv.—["His (Fox's) letters are perfect in their kind, more agreeable—as they have nothing of his egotism—than those of Cicero, and more solid than those of Madame de Sévigné. Those which I have been able to present to the reader are models of English composition, as well as valuable depositories of the critical opinions of Mr. Fox upon the most excellent authors of ancient and modern times."]

"His letters, etc." Compare them with Cicero's! What! are we as much interested by the occurrences and opinions in these, nearly all of which are intrinsically of small moment, as by the events which agitate the soul of Cicero in the most important era of the Roman commonwealth? Even if Mr. Fox had said anything about the great characters of the day, could we be as much interested, however personally and painfully we have felt from them, about the actions of a Pulteney and a Whitelocke, as we are by those of Cæsar and Cato, of Antony and Brutus? The style is unimportant in both. Who would pick out a solecism from the conflagration of a city, or listen to an harmonious sentence in the very downfall of a republic? The history of Mr. Fox was written with no carelessness, most certainly, but with incorrectness, and, I think, with weakness. His reasonings are ill-expressed and disorderly; his deductions inconsequent, his expressions neither clear nor

compact. Cumberland,[1] with a shrewdness of criticism which he never showed before, pointed out these defects in his review.

*Pages* xv.-xvii.—"[His Historical Fragment was written under the disadvantage of his frame of mind being somewhat affected by a tinge of melancholy. . . . Public affairs were so manifestly tending to a crisis when he wrote, and the minister had so much weakened and impaired the constitution, that Mr. Fox could not but *grieve* — for his feelings were warm, and his mind of a truly patriotic cast. . . . In having recourse to history, still continuing his exertions in favour of liberty, he showed the generous struggles of a noble mind to serve his country and posterity in the only way left open to him; and if a shade of melancholy pervades it, the source from which it certainly sprung (for he was easy in circumstances, and truly happy in domestic life) is the most honourable and venerable sentiment which can exist in the human breast]—grief for a wronged and *unhappily* misguided country."

As if a country could be *happily* misguided! In the *Dii me mali perdant, pejus perdant*, etc., of the Romans, there was an idiomatic intensity: and the Greeks had a similar expression of their feelings. We in these countries have nothing like it, except among the secretary's countrymen—*killed dead.* Grief for a wronged country! And

[1] The first number (February 1, 1809), of *The London Review*, which Richard Cumberland edited, contains an article by him on Mr. Fox's *Reign of James II.*

yet this grieving patriot outraged the whole continent of South America; a whole people, whose arms and hearts were open to us, by refusing them the appointment, the maintenance, the security, nay, by heaven, the mere impunity of their own *civil* officers, treating them worse than the most atrocious enemies had been ever treated, worse than any conquered colony of the democratic French, under the rancorous and vindictive Pitt: sending tax-gatherers of all descriptions into their country, and filling up every place and appointment by creatures of his own, ruined and desperate gamblers, whose rapine, if it drove them into revolt, would at least have broken the sinews of retaliating war.

[*Pages* xviii.-xix.—"His return to politics . . . suspended his *History*. The words of the noble editor of the Fragment are very remarkable, as to Mr. Fox foregoing his original intention of retiring for a time from public life. 'The remonstrances, however, of those friends, for whose judgment he had the greatest deference, ultimately prevailed.' Here is proof, from the authority of Lord Holland, how reluctant Mr. Fox was to abandon his intention. I know that the basis of his determination was a solid and grand one; that occasionally at his breakfast-table we had a little discussion on this point; and that Mrs. Fox and myself uniformly joined in recommending retirement until the people felt properly upon public affairs. I am sorry to be

compelled to say, that the friends who 'ultimately prevailed' calculated very ill upon political matters, and did not sufficiently estimate the towering and grand character of Mr. Fox."]

*Page* xix.—"Until the people felt properly upon public affairs." He should have lived, then, until now. As far as he and his competitors are concerned, the people never felt more correctly. No more of staring dupery to chattering impostors, mounting the same stage and exhibiting the same tricks, after hooting them off, successively. If the people feels less for freedom than it used to do, it also feels less for faction. It has lost most of its money, but it has recovered a part of its wits. We must allow it a little time to get the better of its shame, and it will be the same manly people it was before.

*Page* xix.—"The towering and manly character, etc."[1]

What! of a fellow who replied to one asking a place of him, "We lie three in a bed already:"[2] who was instrumental in bringing an act before Parliament, and in procuring it to be passed, to the eternal shame and infamy of — ——, which should enable Lord Grenville to be the auditor

[1] See last extract. Trotter wrote "towering and grand character."

[2] *The Courier* of March 15, 1806, said, in a leading article: "To use a pleasant but homely phrase of the new ministerialists, they now lie three in a bed. The Foxite, and the Sidmouthite, and the Grenvilleite now pig together, head and front, in the same truckle bed."

of his own accounts! who had the impudence to say that Hanover should be as dear to Englishmen as Hampshire.[1] Could an Englishman say this? Could it be uttered in the English language? Could it be inculcated, could it be proposed, could it be suggested, to the English people? Louis, and James, and Barillon, were in their graves. What man succeeded them? what man revived their projects? Charles James Fox; the historian of their transactions, who had just detected and exposed and reprobated their crimes. Shame and contempt on those, who, knowing these facts, profess themselves of his party and call themselves after his name. To what extremities will not faction urge them! What practical lies will they not commit! He trod under foot every compact with his constituents, every promise, every oath, solemnly made before the people. The people was his sovereign, but was Hanover their patrimony, or their country? He never came into office but through a breach of honour, never without a close and intimate coalition with men whom he had frequently, and loudly, and justly, denounced as worthy of the gallows. So atrocious is his guilt, he never joined them but at the very moment when their criminality was at the highest; and when, without his coalescence, the people

[1] See note [1] on page 16.

would have dragged them to punishment or abandoned them to disgrace.

*Page* xxii.—"Are the present race to go to the grave without further knowledge of Mr. Fox [than that conveyed in the Preface to the Fragment]?"[1]

He will not be quite so fortunate.

Fama loquetur *anus*.[2]

He may surely expect a few quartos from the pacific pen of Mr. Roscoe.[3]

Et *vitulâ* tu dignus, et hic.[4]

*Page* xxv.—["In early youth, I understand, Mr. Fox was distinguished by extraordinary application to study. He was abroad for a short time at the early age of fourteen, to which may be attributed, probably, that fluency, perfect understanding, and good pronunciation of French, which most eminently marked him, amongst his countrymen, and even Frenchmen, at Paris. His knowledge of Italian was nearly as great, and probably to be attributed to the same cause. If I were to sketch the divisions of his life, I would form them into: His youth, warm and impetuous, but full of extraordinary promise. His middle age, energetic and patriotic. His latter

[1] Trotter is alluding to Lord Holland's preface to Fox's *Reign of James II.*

[2] Catullus, lxxviii., 10.

[3] William Roscoe (1753–1831) had already published his lives of Lorenzo de' Medici and Leo X.

[4] Virgil, *Eclog.* iii. 109.

days, commencing from the French revolution, simple, grand, and sublime."]

"His youth, warm and impetuous. His middle age, etc." His youth was very well known to have exceeded in every kind of profligacy the youth of any Englishman his contemporary. To the principles of a Frenchman he added the habits of a Malay,[1] in idleness, drunkenness, and gaming. In middle life he was precisely the opposite of whoever was in power until he could spring forward to the same station. Whenever Mr. Pitt was wrong, Mr. Fox was right, and then only. His morals, his taste, his literature, all were French;[2] he grew rather wiser afterwards. His principles were arbitrary when the government of France was so. He approved of every change there, whether of men or measures. The constituent assembly, the convention, Brissot, Robespierre, Tallien, Barras, Bonaparte, all these in succession were the objects of his admiration. His sagacity could find out something to palliate every crime they committed. All were proposed to us as worthy of our confidence: we could make peace and treaties with all of them, we could do everything with them but fight.

[1] "Gaming, with the Malays, is a substitute for betel."—LANDOR, *Works*, iii. 109.

[2] "Mrs. Crewe told me," Samuel Rogers said, "that on some occasion, when it was remarked that Fox still retained his early love for France and everything French, Burke said: 'Yes; he is like a cat—he is fond of the house, though the family be gone.'"—*Table Talk*, p. 81.

## CHAPTER II

### WAR AND POLICY

Fox, the King, and the nation—Easy temper and lax principles—Pitt's lost opportunity—Traitorous Correspondence Bill—Pitt's passion—Duel with Tierney—Eloquence not statesmanship—The war with France—Lord Hawkesbury's project—Valenciennes and Dantzig—Expedition to the Dardanelles—Slave trade—A disjointed ministry—Posterity's judgment.

[*Page* 2.—"The vulgar, whose prejudices it is difficult to efface, and who are more prone to depreciate than to make allowances for great characters, have long imagined, and even still continue to think, that Mr. Fox was a mere dissipated man of pleasure. This idea had been industriously cherished and propagated by a party, whose interested views were promoted by keeping from the councils of the nation a man so eminently their superior. The unprincipled desires of selfish ambition had kept him out of stations for which nature had so eminently qualified him. Destined, as he appeared, of becoming the founder of a political school in England—capable of raising her in the opinion of other nations, it was his ill fate to be] opposed by a minister incapable of appreciating his merit, and unwilling to recommend it to the approbation of his sovereign, though himself unfit to be premier, and indeed inadequate to fill any considerable department of the state."

I believe it is not usual with ministers to recommend, very pressingly, their opponents to royal favour.[1] The King and nation judged for themselves. They had seen as much of Mr. Fox as Mr. Pitt had seen: they had tried him, and he was found unfit for his situation: they tried him again, and he was *more* unfit. The same tergiversation, the same profligacy, the same unsteadiness, the same inclining and yielding, which never would let him be upright, the same incapacity of apportioning means to ends, and the same inability to retain that popular favour which hardly ever totally deserts the statesman of easy temper and lax principles. Nothing but the most open and utter contempt of all fair dealing with them would make the people fall off from a man after their own image, in favour of one, unbending, contemptuous, and scornful, and only accessible to be repulsive. No two men ever so grossly mismanaged public affairs. Whatever was the government of France since the revolution, even under the most rash and inexperienced of its rulers, and amidst difficulties in which the most experienced of them would have been perplexed, the government of France had always the advantage of ours, always excelled it in intelligence and in promptitude. When

[1] In 1804, Pitt urged the claims of Fox, but George III. refused to have anything to do either with him or Grenville.—Lord Rosebery's *Pitt*, 241.

the members of the directory proved themselves accessible to bribery,[1] the richest nation in Europe —such *then* was England—formed no such attempt or hope. They had foiled Mr. Pitt; he saw only the men; he was bold and sincere enough to tell them again and again how he hated them, and that such an enemy of corruption would not gratify their cupidity. He might have obtained all the ostensible objects of the war for less money than he expended in any fortnight of it. They could not, indeed, with safety have abandoned one village of France, yet they could have evacuated all Holland; and their people, weary of war and taxes, and cooling from their revolutionary frenzy, would have applauded a peace (durable because equal) founded on this basis. But they had thrown him on the ground, and beaten him soundly, and he kicked without an object to kick at. When he rose again, he attacked with equal vehemence those who looked on without sympathy, and employed his Attorney-General to involve them in some sufferings of their own.[2]

[1] "No sooner had Lord Malmesbury left Lille (Sept. 18, 1797), than Mr. Pitt received a secret overture, on the part of Barras, offering peace on his own terms, if only an enormous sum—no less than £2,000,000 sterling—could be provided for Barras and his friends."—Stanhope's *Pitt*, iii. 61. In his *Letters to Lord Liverpool* (p. 56), Landor says: "There was indeed a time when the directory was accessible to bribery, as was proved in the notorious case of the American Commissioners." Marshall, Pinckney, and Gerry were offered a bribe for their mediation.

[2] The Traitorous Correspondence Bill was introduced by Sir John Scott, Attorney-General, on March 15, 1793.

Hurried by passion, he seldom had an aim, and always missed it. Obstinate and perverse, but more changeable than is usual with the opinionative, neither his modes of attack, nor his motives for it, were fixed. His warfare was more like the rapid struggles and scratches of some timorous animal just caught than the deliberate and manly blows that aim at the vitals of an enemy. He retracted no insult, he renounced no error. The son of a chivalrous father, whose personal and private view of honour was serene and clear, whose sense of political and official duties was, and was only in a moderate degree, subordinate to his sense of the religious; this very son, whose preceptor was a bishop,[1] this our defender against atheism, who had enacted and enforced so many fasts, and supplications, and forms of prayer, went forth on a Sunday morning, with a pistol in his hand, to meet an importunate accountant[2] who had questioned him in the House. How happens it that inconsistency is so frequently, so almost perpetually, the attendant of eloquence? Is fickleness but one remove from facility? or is the cause to be found in that self-deception which comes from deceiving others, and which, while every thing moves with it, is unconscious that it moves?

Mr. Pitt was eloquent, so was Mr. Fox: so were

[1] The Rev. George Tomline, afterwards Pretyman, Bishop of Lincoln, 1757, was the younger Pitt's tutor at Cambridge.

[2] Pitt fought his duel with George Tierney on May 27, 1798.

Anytus and Melitus,[1] and all the demagogues whose vociferations have preceded the downfall of a state. In England it is for eloquence alone that men are chosen to fill the offices of government. If they can speak three hours together, it is thought, with reason, that they can do great things. Nevertheless it has been the opinion of some that there is a latent flaw and unsoundness in this reasoning, and that its application ought not to be universal or unreserved. They have suspected it hence has happened that, with such resources as no nation ever possessed, we have done so extremely little against an enemy who, according to the minister himself, had no resources at all. We have given this enemy both pleas and power enough to regulate every court in Europe, to drill every king, and to tear the epaulet from every emperor. There was a time when twenty thousand Englishmen might have marched to Paris ; not in the way imagined by such people as Lord Hawkesbury and Mr. Canning,[2]

[1] The accusers of Socrates.

[2] Compare this with Burke : "Had we carried on the war on the side of France which looks towards the Channel or the Atlantic, we should have attacked our enemy on his weak and unarmed side."—*Second Letter on a Regicide Peace*, p. 98.

As for the plan of a rapid advance into the heart of France, urged in 1793, Lord Stanhope says : "When Mr. Jenkinson [afterwards Lord Hawkesbury] ventured in the House of Commons to declare his approval of it, the idea was received with derision. Long afterwards . . . the words 'Lord Hawkesbury's march to Paris' were the burden of many a jest or satirical song against him."—*Life of Pitt*, ii. 204.

Fox, in his letter to the electors of Westminster, 1793, alluding to Mr. Jenkinson's project, exclaims : "The conquest of France ! O calumniated crusaders, how rational and moderated were your projects !

along a pleasant paved road shaded with elms and apple-trees, through Calais and Amiens, where the people once were English, and are still vastly our friends, but as allies to fifty thousand Royalists in La Vendée, led by a Condé. But Valenciennes was taken in the name of the emperor of Germany; there was such an emperor then, and the people of France saw clearly that the sword which we carried under the pretext of loyalty was drawn solely for ambition. There was a time when the same twenty thousand would have turned the balance in favour of Austria; but they were scattered all over the world, as if Napoleon had ordered them into such cantonments. Russia had beaten the French. If we had relieved Dantzig[1] their left wing would not merely have been turned, but cut off; it was without support. There was also a time when the force I have mentioned would have formed a nucleus for the armies of Prussia, Sweden, Hesse, Hanover. Exasperated by the recent cruelties of the enemy, they would no longer have fought for one government or another: they would have fought for themselves, and fought well. Lastly, there was a time too—if in such circumstances it is worth remembering—when the wretched

O! much-injured Louis XIV., upon what slight grounds have you been accused of restless and inordinate ambition! O! tame and feeble Cervantes, with what a timid pencil and faint colours have you painted the portrait of a disordered imagination!

[1] Dantzig surrendered to Bonaparte May 27, 1807.

natives of Egypt[1] might have been emancipated. But the country could not be secured, long together, by three or four thousand men; Mr. Fox must be weaker than a babe or drowsier than a kitten to suppose it. The attempt to awe Constantinople[2] was worse than Pittite, a city where there are more stout fighting men, men of lives and habits altogether military, than in any other throughout the world. I have spoken already of Buenos Ayres. So many instances of miserable folly have never occurred within so short a period, I will not say in England, I will not say in modern Europe; I will say under the most stupid, the most slothful, the most brutalised of Roman, or Byzantine, or Asiatic emperors. Xerxes and Darius could afford a good many; ours would have exhausted them. Collect and place before your eyes all the errors of these poor creatures, and you cannot, I repeat it, bring together such a mass within so small a compass. You may trace within the short administration of one demagogue all that

[1] In March, 1807, five thousand men under General Mackenzie Frazer were sent to Alexandria, which capitulated; but the further operations failed.

[2] In February, 1807, a force under Sir Thomas Duckworth was sent to the Dardanelles to favour the views of Russia and to counteract French ascendency at Constantinople. Writing on June 5, 1807, Mr. F. Jackson said: "The loss of our troops in Egypt has been very great, and is attributed to the ill-advised plans of the late Cabinet, and to the still worse-conducted execution of them by the generals. Never have our arms been so disgraced as in that affair, and in the business of the Dardanelles."—*Diaries, etc., of Sir George Jackson*, ii. 123. But Fox, who died on Sept. 13, 1806, could not be blamed.

corrupts the air and poisons the springs of freedom, while, with illusive zeal to unrivet the fetter, he hammered the chain of slavery red-hot. Hope long deferred maketh the heart sick.[1] How many, who relied on his promises, were made very able critics of such sentences! The abolition of the trade in negroes we had influence enough in Europe to have effected, and we did not.[2] The act was ill digested; the prohibitions evasory and incomplete. Mr. Fox might have appealed to Bonaparte, and his love of glory, to abolish it on the continent. It would have cost him nothing but a decree. He would have been proud of having been consulted. Even a petition here would not have been an act of baseness; the less so, the greater the petitioner. To *sound* him—an expression, I am afraid, not applicable to our politicians in reference to him—was not the right method. If we wished the thing done effectually, and not merely the credit of promoting it, we should have addressed his minister in somewhat of this language: "War, then, between our nations must continue. There are many concessions which we believed that our power and our moderation might demand. But if both countries, unhappily, are still subject to

[1] *Proverbs*, xiii. 12.

[2] On June 10, 1806, Fox moved a resolution for the abolition of the slave trade. After forty years, he said, of political life, he could retire with contentment if he carried his resolution. The Royal assent to the Bill abolishing the trade was given on March 25, 1806.

irritations and jealousies, which will cease only under the infliction of greater sufferings, let us atone to humanity in the best way we can, making the readiest and least costly sacrifices. The English are almost the only gainers by a most nefarious and unnatural traffic; others, however, share in its patronage and its disgrace. We desire its abolition. Let the Emperor say whether France or England shall redeem her honour first; which shall first employ all her influence and power in demanding and enforcing the abolition of the African slave-trade through the world."

I think Napoleon would have claimed it as one of the *conceptions of his mighty genius.* It is among the few things which I would entrust to his generosity, knowing that I could lose nothing, and might gain much. When a writer in a state-paper speaks of the wants or desires of humanity, it is considered as merely a piece of cant to lull his countrymen asleep, should his adversary be very bloody-minded; that is, if he applies them to his own country, to the enemy's, or to any hypothetical or imaginary one. Let him appeal and plead in favour of some weak and abject race, not subject to either of the belligerents, not liable to become so, and what was common-place in the last leaf, comes in this with all the cogency, and more than all, of argument. It raises a becoming shame and generous desire, by

the native graces and novel beauty of disinterestedness. Perhaps I have spoken too much on the omissions of a negligent, disjointed ministry, and, some will think, too vehemently against the leader. It is true that almost every possible case of mismanagement has been stated. *The facts exist.* This is my answer. Those who cannot see them, those who overlook them in the public records, are not likely to discover what we lost of prosperity by their inattention, or of glory by their inactivity. We have equally to regret that they failed in every thing abroad, and did *not* fail in almost every thing at home. If any man will come forward and prove even this to be exaggerated, and surely nothing worse can be uttered or imagined of a ministry—statesmen would be an absurd expression—I will then acknowledge myself a very violent and very base calumniator, an implacable enemy of my native land, and—what pensioners and reversionists think infinitely more discreditable—a man without a stake in it. If I could argue with indifference, with coolness, or with patience, of people who have thrown down their principles in their hurry to reach the cabinet and who have brought such ignominy on the country, to say nothing of distress and danger, I should then indeed be a character most truly despicable.

I survey Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt as others will

survey them a century hence, and as, according to my humble views, they appear to higher powers and purer intelligences. I would estimate all men by their wisdom and their virtue. In high stations these indeed are the most assailed and shaken; but they also have the advantage of showing their forms more distinctly, and striking their roots more deep. Nearly all men have, one time or other, been placed in as trying situations as either of these ministers. The emergencies of private life require as much circumspection and discernment as those of public. Persons are placed all around a prime minister; some bring intelligence, some forward despatches, many are ready to assist him with their counsel, and participate in any obloquy his determinations may incur. Precepts and precedents lie everywhere round about him; if he errs in following them he is pardoned, because he *did* follow them, and praised because he was soundly constitutional; if he rejects or never reads them, the scruples of a king or the divisions of a cabinet absolve him. Difficulties of a private kind hamper men by their closeness and continuity. On the worst occasions they can hardly ask advice, on the lighter they neglect it. Hence it has happened that men of great attainments, philosophers and statesmen too, have acted in domestic affairs inconsistently with their wisdom, their glory, and their happiness. Life appears, in

these instances, like a game at billiards. Those who were surrounded by spectators and admirers, at a larger table, and with a profusion of light falling on it from above, strike, in a private and less brilliant room, a lesser ball erroneously. Let us remember, too—for the recollection will be useful when the allusion is forgotten—that he who silenced batteries and navies, and scattered them to be the sport of all the elements, was baffled by the fish nets of Boulogne.[1] When I come, as I intend presently, to make a comparison, not between the two English ministers, but between one of them and Washington, I shall show that difficulties may be, and have been overcome, far more complicated and discouraging than either of these encountered. The present men have committed fewer faults; they act with more firmness, and inspire more confidence. They also have their errors. They ought never to have interfered in the affairs of South America. There is a risk, almost a certainty, of alienating from us not only that country, but Spain. Both will be dissatisfied. Urged by either party, we should have firmly and peremptorily refused. Even that party itself would place more confidence in us, and we should have left a deep authentic impression of our disinterestedness and our integrity.

[1] Referring either to Nelson's attack on the French flotilla at Boulogne, August 15, 1801, or to Sir Sidney Smith's attack with catamarans on Oct. 2, 1804.

## CHAPTER III

### THE KING AND HIS MINISTERS

Chatham's eloquence—His pension—A minister in the witness-box—Pitt all account-book—*De mortuis*—The Sinking Fund—Fox in retirement—As a man of letters—Pascal—National monuments—A Pantheon for Hyde Park—Statues of great men—Bacon and Raleigh—George Washington and William Pitt compared—A contemptible Opposition—George III. and the Army—The American Revolution—A limited monarchy—Forms of government—A Prime Minister in leading-strings—Failure of coalitions—The Roman Triumvirate.

*Page* 3 *of the Memoirs.*—["Mr. Pitt, under the controul of an extensive and liberal genius, like that of Mr. Fox, might have been a useful minister of finance; but, in attempting to regulate the concerns of the world, his vigour was creative of destruction, and his imperious spirit, so unworthy a true statesman, was prejudicial to liberty abroad and dangerous to it at home. The financial dictator of Downing Street was unfit to cope with the consummate military and diplomatic characters that had newly risen upon the Continent; and it is probable that even his father, Lord Chatham, a man great through the weakness of France, would have been foiled in such a contest; certainly not with so much disgrace, but, perhaps, with equal injury to the country."]

"Lord Chatham, a man great through the

weakness of France." Not entirely so. He was rather great *per se*. His eloquence was more like the eloquence of Demosthenes[1] than Mr. Fox's was: one was invariably high, the other never rose. Both were wrong; but it is better that admiration should flag from its continuance than that it never should be excited. Demosthenes, in the general tenor of his oratory, was warm, equable, and sincere; in the higher parts there was a solemnity, a sanctitude, an enthusiastic, vivifying, all-pervading spirit, by virtue of which every petty passion lay inanimate and extinct. In the amplitude of a soul so equable and so pure, he saw no enemies but the enemies of his country. Wherever they arose, his fire was directed to one point, and nothing stood before it. Better is it that such men as Augustulus, or Commodus, or Louis XV. should be called Cæsar than that genius should submit to the same outrages as truth, and Fox be called a Demosthenes. If Lord Chatham more resembled him as an orator, the resemblance ended here. In Demosthenes was the pride of an inflexible republican; in Lord Chatham was the "pride that licks the dust."[2] He accepted a pension from the enemy

[1] Horace Walpole said that Chatham, in the speech he delivered on November 13, 1755, surpassed Cicero and Demosthenes. Sir James Mackintosh, writing in *The Monthly Repository*, September, 1807, declared that Fox was "the most Demosthenean speaker since Demosthenes."

[2] Pope's *Prologue to Satires*, 333.

he had reviled. One had been granted to his sister by Lord Bute.[1] He wrote an angry letter to her, and told her "he had hoped that the names of Pitt and pension would never come together." He received one himself, soon after, from the same person; and his own letter was his sister's congratulation. The King had shewn the same aversion to him as he uniformly shewed to every man of genius: when the public acclamation forced him again into the council, he approached the sovereign and courted his favour, with a degree of reverential humility which it would have been hardly less base to have felt than to have feigned. Some courtiers, at a distance, could not believe the evidence of their senses. "Yes, yes, it is Pitt," said one behind; "I see his hook-nose between his knees."[2]

The son was never guilty of a meanness such

[1] When Mrs. Anne Pitt, sister of William Pitt the elder, received a pension, he wrote to her that he grieved to see the name of Pitt in a list of pensions. On October 6, 1761, the day after his resignation, a pension of £3,000 a year was settled upon Pitt himself, for three lives. His sister made a copy of his letter, and meant to send it to him, but was restrained by friends.

Horace Walpole and Thomas Gray blamed Chatham for accepting either peerage or pension. "What!" said Walpole, "to blast one's character for the sake of a paltry annuity and a long-necked peerage!" Chatham's biographer, F. Thackeray, writes: "How malignant or obtuse must that mind be which cannot distinguish the case of Mr. Pitt from that of the common herd of pensioners."—*Life of Chatham*, i. 593.

[2] "It is told of Chatham that when he met a bishop he bowed so low that his nose could be seen between his knees. So appalling a suavity of demeanour inspired probably even more terror than his indomitable eye."—Lord Rosebery's *Pitt*, p. 64.

as this. His neck was unbent when his word was broken and his honour cast away; even when he came into a court of justice[1] and swore he had forgotten what he had sworn he never would forget. Lord Chatham was all romance; Mr. William was all account-book. The above is, however, too plain a proof that neither his memory nor his ledger were to be trusted.

*Page* 4.—"[I have, however, no desire in stigmatising one of these personages (Pitt and Fox) to elevate the other!] Both rest in the grave."[2]

This is, of all reasons, the most weak and wretched, why people should not be censured for the evil they have done. It might indeed have some force and validity if the evil and example ceased totally with their lives. But even then not much. If they are living, a writer tells you

[1] For Pitt's evidence at the trial of Horne Tooke, in 1794, see *State Trials*, xxv. 381. The Prime Minister had been summoned by the defence to prove that the objects of the reform movement in which he had taken a part were similar to those of the agitation with which Horne Tooke and Major John Cartwright were connected. In his imaginary conversation between Pitt and Canning, Landor makes Pitt say: "I deferred from session to session a reform in Parliament, because, having sworn to promote it by all means in my power, I did not wish to seem perjured to the people. In the affair of Maidstone nobody could prove me so. I only swore I had forgotten what nobody but myself could swear that I remembered."—*Works*, iii. 196. Landor seems to have mixed up the trial of Horne Tooke with that of Arthur O'Connor and others.

[2] Trotter adds: "But I should deem it derogatory to Mr. Fox's Memory if I paid any posthumous compliments to the character and talents of a minister, of whom the best that can be said is that he failed through ignorance, and ruined his country through mistake."

he will not hurt the feelings of the living; if dead, it is ungenerous, he says, to attack the character of those who are incapable of making their defence. If any one is guilty of *falsehood* against the living, let the laws chastise him; if against the dead, let infamy pursue him; let his memory be held in detestation.

Tiberius and Sejanus "rest in the grave"; but the historian has recorded their actions, and they really seem considerably amiss. Poor Domitian has not even a fly to bear him company, yet some people will be so uncharitable as to whisper things to his disadvantage. It might not indeed have been quite expedient, nor altogether safe, perhaps, to say such *strong* things in his presence; but then how vastly more liberal and manly!

*Page* 5.—"The passions of the vulgar made and kept Mr. Pitt minister."[1]

No, no; the vices, the profligacy, the perfidy of Mr. Fox made Mr. Pitt minister. He was at length more grave and decent. Peace made the nation thrive, and her prosperity was attributed to Mr. Pitt. The project of the sinking fund[2] was laid before him; he rejected it; yet

[1] Trotter adds: "But the vulgar themselves are daily receiving convincing proofs how little value they have received for their money."

[2] Pitt took the main idea of the sinking fund, which he started in 1786, from Dr. R. Price, author of *Treatise on Reversionary Annuities*, 1771, and an *Appeal to the Public on the Subject of the National Debt*, 1772. When Pitt resolved, says Lecky, upon the reduction of the

the adoption of it afterwards is the only financial merit which his party can attribute to him. If it is glorious, it is a glory which requires not to be inscribed upon his tomb. Leave it alone, and it will have matter to act upon long enough.

*Page* 7.—[" When I first had the happiness of knowing Mr. Fox, he had retired, in a great measure, from public life, and was inclining toward the evening of his days. A serene and cloudless magnanimity, respecting the pursuit of power, raised him to an enviable felicity. His habits were very domestic, and his taste for literature peculiarly strong, as well as peculiarly elegant. His love for a country life, with all its simple and never-fatiguing charms, was great. His temper disposed him to enjoy and never to repine. Had his great powers been employed for the benefit of mankind in literary composition and researches after knowledge—instead of being exhausted in useless debates . . .—the world, and Europe in particular, would have reaped advantages which his country blindly rejected; and that great mind, which made little impression upon a disciplined oligarchical senate, would more efficaciously have operated upon the philosophers, the statesmen, and the patriots of Europe."]

" Had his great powers been employed for the benefit of mankind in composition," they would

national debt, he received from Dr. Price three separate plans, one of which he adopted with scarcely any change, though without any public recognition of the author.—*History*, v. 324.

have left him a secondary character in history, poetry, or criticism. His verses[1] have little ease, little imagination, little spirit. In history he has produced by long study what many young men at the universities, with the materials before them, would have produced in one term. Few compositions have more faults or greater. In criticism he was the admirer of whatever was most regular and orderly—the reverse of his own character; just as the amiable Thomson, mindful of Scotland, lavishes the enthusiasm of his poetry on the odours of spring:

Ethereal mildness, come,[2]

and the novelists of the Palais Royal are enamoured of modesty and blushes.

*Page* 8.—"[At a time when other men become more devoted to the pursuits of ambition, or to the mean and universal passion, avarice; and when their characters accordingly become rigid, and unproductive of new sentiments, Mr. Fox had all the sensibility and freshness of youth, with the energetic glow of manhood in its prime. Knowledge

[1] "Like all men of genius," Sir James Mackintosh says of Fox, "he delighted to take refuge in poetry from the vulgarity and irritation of business. His own verses have claimed no low place among those which the French call *vers de société*."—*Monthly Repository*, September, 1807. Perhaps all but his verses to Mrs. Crewe and those addressed to Mrs. Fox "on his attaining the age of fifty," are forgotten. Sydney Smith said: "We are no admirers of Mr. Fox's poetry. His *vers de société* appear to us flat and insipid. To write verses was the only thing which Mr. Fox ever attempted to do without doing well."—*Edinburgh Review*, 1809.

[2] "Come, gentle spring, ethereal mildness, come."—*Seasons*, i. 1.

of the world had not at all hardened or disgusted him. He knew men, and pitied rather than condemned them.] It was singular to behold such a character in England, whose national characteristic is rather philosophic reasoning than the sensibility of genius."

And surely there is more philosophic reasoning in Mr. Fox than sensibility of genius; in his writings most certainly. But national characteristics never reach the more elevated regions of mind; men of genius are not marked by the same *reddle* as those on the common of the world. Do we find in Pascal any thing of the lying, gasconading, vapouring Frenchman? On the contrary, do we not find, in despite of the most miserable language, all the sober and retired graces of style, all the confident ease of manliness and strength, with an honest but not abrupt simplicity, which appeals to the reason, but is also admitted to the heart? Let this man, if any, be compared with Demosthenes. He was not less, he hardly could be greater. The same sincerity, the same anxiety, the same fervour, was in both, for the only great objects of a high and aspiring soul, of laudable, perhaps of pardonable, ambition. One was for Athens; the other was not indeed for Paris or for France, but for what most truly was his country, whose rewards he would lay open to all men.

*Page* 17.—"[. . . the most illustrious, but often the most calumniated, of public men in the eighteenth century (C. J. Fox).] No monument yet marks a nation's gratitude towards him."[1]

We have thrown away more money than enough on monuments; yet I would willingly see in Hyde Park, just above the water, a building like the Pantheon at Rome, with a statue, and only the names, of all our most truly great men from Alfred to Nelson: Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip, and Algernon Sydney, Shakespeare, Milton, J. Hampden, W. Penn, Blake, Locke, Newton, Marlborough, Washington, Franklin, Nelson. These are our most illustrious characters, in politics, war, and literature; nor can any modern nation produce so many of equal greatness. Bacon I have not mentioned. Him I would reserve for a station in Westminster Hall. *He* should have an inscription. One side of the pedestal should contain his sentence on Raleigh; the other that sentence which was afterwards passed on himself.[2] We lost Washington, but he was ours, and death gives him back. No man ever encountered such

[1] Trotter proceeds: "And the all-prevailing ascendency of the system which Lord Bute, Lord North, and Mr. William Pitt successively defended and propagated, has stifled every parliamentary expression of respect and veneration for the memory of Charles James Fox, while a successful skirmish or a dubious battle unites all parties in conferring honours and rewards!"

[2] It was Bacon, as High Chancellor of England, who on October 24, 1618, Raleigh having been brought before the Council, informed him of its resolution to advise King James to order the sentence of 1603

difficulties in politics and war: no man ever adapted one to the other with such skill. In fortitude, justice, and equanimity, no man ever excelled him; no exemplar has been recommended to our gratitude, love, and veneration, by the most partial historian, or the most encomiastic biographer, in which so many and so great virtues, public and private, were united. His name, his manners, his language, his sentiments, his soul, were English; and the wretches went peaceably to the grave who traitorously separated him from England!

Compare the disadvantages he had to encounter in a war against this country with what Mr. Pitt had to encounter against France. America had few soldiers, and no treasury; Mr. Pitt had a large, well-disciplined army, and the richest exchequer in the world at his disposal. In America there was no union of council, and a scattered population. In England, Mr. Pitt was the leader of a House of Commons in which he could command an absolute majority; and the people were all within his reach. I have not the heart to pursue the parallel.

*Page* 17.—"Nor do I think it is one moment

to be carried out. But the records of the sitting have been lost, and the exact words used by Bacon are not discoverable.—Martin Hume's *Walter Raleigh*. On May 3, 1622, Bacon was sentenced to a fine of £40,000 and imprisonment during the King's pleasure, and debarred from sitting in parliament or coming within the verge of the court.

to be admitted that so unfortunate a politician as his parliamentary rival, could have been Mr. Fox's coadjutor in office. Their principles were diametrically opposite."[1]

Unfortunate he was, indeed! But Mr. Fox was equally so in every plan and project, and had the additional mortification of being the dupe, twice over, of this slippery and shallow man. The secretary had modestly said before that Mr. Pitt might have acted with Mr. Fox, although subordinately. They changed principles as they changed situations. There is always a thing in England called an opposition, which it is requisite that I should mention, for it has now become so contemptible as scarcely to be an object in the public eye. The principles of Mr. Fox, if the expression may be allowed, and it be conceded that he had any, were violently aristocratical when he was in office, and no less democratical when he was out. His opponent is called a "practical lover of arbitrary power, who in his own person exercised it too long for the glory of his sovereign, or the happiness of his people."[2]

[1] Trotter proceeds: "The one (Pitt) was a practical lover of arbitrary power, and in his own person exercised it too long for the glory of his sovereign, or the happiness of his people: the other (Fox) was a sincere friend to a limited monarchy, which is the only species of government recognised by the British constitution, was a benevolent statesman of the first order, and an undaunted advocate for liberty, whether civil rights, or freedom of conscience were concerned."

[2] See last note.

A very little of it is quite enough for the happiness of a people, but the glory of our sovereign was not tarnished by any exercise of arbitrary power. He loved the bustle and dust of a review,[1] and fancied a battle was quite as fine a thing. It was glorious to see, worn out in his service, veteran suits of laced regimentals, and their places supplied with alacrity by others in all their freshness and strength. These were his foibles; they led to unhappy results; but he was a virtuous, kind, just man. In reading and in memory (we pass by Pitt) he was not inferior to Mr. Fox; in judgment they were too equal. He was uniformly moral, and if not always dignified he knew that dignity was more requisite in the second place than in the first. Kings are commanding by their condescension and their beneficence; ministers, by keeping at an equal distance from the people and from the King. Experience and wisdom are far less conducive to the permanency of their power than a temperate courtesy and a sedate reserve. Those who excited the American war were guilty of high treason; in violating the liberty of the subject, and in advising the sovereign to decline the redress of grievances. Some of these are yet living; and examples of justice after many years are only the more important and the more awful. Justice,

[1] "I believe your King," Landor makes Benjamin Franklin say, "to be as honest and wise a man as those about him; but, unhappily, he can see no difference between a review and a battle."—*Works* iii. 374.

when a nation is flourishing, reposes, but never sleeps. The King was not at any time urgent with his parliament to make encroachments at home or abroad. The fault was totally with the people: they received, and returned as their representatives, men who ought to have been sent in a body to the hulks.

*Page* 17.—"The other, Mr. Fox, was a sincere friend to *limited monarchy.*"

I will not quarrel with an old expression, from respect to its very feebleness. I believe he wished it, in general, to be very limited indeed. I know, what is more important, that, by his unsteadiness and duplicity, he has sanctioned the opinion in many, of there being no such thing in existence as political honesty; and has made the question start, in firmer minds than his own, whether all governments are not nearly alike when viewed closely; whether it is not almost a matter of indifference which be abolished or which be established; whether, in short, whatever is best administered be not best.[1] One could hardly imagine, that from so turbulent a spirit[2] there should descend on other men the political optimism of Pope, and the political quietism of Goldsmith. It is true that many things make a man far more miserable,

[1] For forms of government let fools contest,
Whate'er is best administer'd is best.
POPE, *Essay on Man*, iii. 303.

[2] Bolingbroke.

directly and individually, than forms and species of government can do: it is equally so, that nothing makes him more base, and ultimately more wretched, than those ideal ones which he pursues from the craft and imposture of demagogues. Under monarchies of long establishment, there is sometimes an exalted and chimerical sense of honour: if we observe it less frequently in popular or mixt governments, it is because the people have been grossly deceived by those who have exalted and flattered them, and deceit is become, in their opinion, a constituent part, an element of state, or an attribute of power and genius. Confidence, in the mean time, by degrees, grows cold in their rulers and in each other. Every man now begins to seize or to solicit a something from the public, well knowing that his neighbour cannot openly condemn in him what is committed by the members and sanctioned by the head of his own party. Corruption rises higher and higher, taxes are imposed that its channels may be filled to the very brim; until at last those unfortunate mortals, who considered every thing they saw as an indication of prosperity and abundance, find themselves circumvented by a flood in their own grounds, which they neither can stem nor lower: competence and quiet are their last wishes, and renovation under an absolute monarchy their only hope.

*Page* 18.—"Ministries formed of repugnant and conflicting materials cannot be permanent or efficient."

Yet Mr. Fox chose, twice, to be a member of such a ministry.[1]

*Page* 18.—"[Every department ought to be filled by men of whom the statesman, who undertakes to conduct the affairs of a nation, has the selection, and on whose principles, as well as talents, he can rely.] The disorder which otherwise takes place from the counteraction of the *inferior servants* of government, is of the worst kind, paralysing every grand measure of the head of the ministry, and even *controuling* his intentions."

What a pretty head of a ministry must it be, which can suffer itself to be *counteracted* by the *inferior* servants of government! but to be *controuled* by them, to be controuled in his very *intentions*! no writer could ever conceive such a notion, unless the character of some such minister as Mr. Fox were before his eyes. Was Lord Chatham controuled or counteracted by these inferior servants? He found indeed opposition in the cabinet, as this bundle of dry sticks is called; and, like a passionate man, retired.[2] He should have sent his opponents to the Tower, as privy to

[1] In 1783 and 1806.

[2] The elder Pitt and Temple resigned office on October 5, 1761, on the rejection of Pitt's proposals that hostilities should be commenced against Spain.

the machinations of the Spanish court, and refusing to frustrate them; contrary to their allegiance, and to their oath as privy counsellors.

The Spanish war, and open hostilities from the Spaniards, would have commenced before it would be necessary to bring forward the trial; the nation would have applauded his vigilance, would have appointed him sole arbiter of their fates and fortunes, and would, even to this day, have experienced the beneficial results of his promptitude and energy. The French, instead of a people which we deprecate, as likely "*to eat us up quick, being so despitefully set against us,*" would have lost all symptoms of so formidable an appetite, would have been no people at all, would have fallen again into their original diversity of nations.

*Page* 19.—"[The great genius of Mr. Fox, to have been efficient, should have reigned supreme in the management of public affairs. Mr. Pitt, under the wholesome restraints, and instructed by the enlightened mind of that great man, might have conducted a subordinate department with benefit to his country; but as to co-operation with him, on any system of co-ordinate power, the plan must have been detrimental to the public service, as long as it was attempted, and certainly would have been degrading to Mr. Fox.] The more I have considered, the more I am persuaded that his own conception of retirement was the true rule of conduct to follow."

Certainly, when he had had, long before, the practical proof how unpopular and how inefficient were coalitions. In what country have they ever succeeded? In what country have they ever failed to be the signal of its subjugation? The triumvirate of Rome was formed in the days of its utmost power and splendour, when the republic was in possession of more and greater talents than ever, when a spirit of public liberty on one side, and a reverence for establishments on the other, were the sentiments that animated the senate and the people. Yet Rome fell under the coalition. What then could be expected in England? Not an individual was in political existence in whom posterity will see anything to imitate or admire. The national spirit was gone; even party was indifferent and torpid. We appeared to be at the conclusion of some great, solemn feast, when the mighty host and illustrious company had departed; when a single lamp in the center showed the magnitude of the hall and the remains of the entertainment; and when a few of the favoured vulgar had been admitted, who were assailing each other with coarse jests and insolent recriminations, and spoiling, and pocketing, and buffeting for the fragments.

## CHAPTER IV

### IRELAND AND THE UNION

Fox and Ireland—Character of the Irish—Their women of letters—Pitt's Irish policy—Political peerages—Poland and Ireland—A point of difference—Fox's peers—Lord Howick—Catholic emancipation—Religious disabilities.

*Page* 25.—"[As my acquaintance commenced with Mr. Fox toward the evening of his days, and at the period when a rebellion in Ireland was followed by what has been fallaciously styled a Union, I had the opportunity of observing his great humanity, and his freedom from prejudice, in regard to that country. In this respect he ever seemed to me to stand alone, among English politicians, many of whom are liberal enough in their own way, but all of whom agree in a love of dominion, and in a certain degree of contempt respecting the Irish, which, one day or other, will, I fear, generate events fatal to the repose of both islands.] There is no nation in Europe, perhaps, more contracted in their way of thinking, or less fit to establish a conciliatory government, than the English."

No two nations in Europe, I do believe, are so utterly dissimilar as the English and Irish; and, what would be incredible to a foreigner, no two

know so little of each other. Yet, whatever the government may do, the English people admire and love the Irish, although in general we see bad specimens: idlers, gamesters, and fortune-hunters, or persons who, in their own country, have tried indifferent talents unsuccessfully. Men of family there are usually very courteous, seldom very well-informed, never very correct or conversant in matters of literature or taste. Contrary to what happens everywhere else, the middle rank is the worst. A want of polite literature is supplied by crude extracts from Curran and Grattan, by splinters of metaphor, and by sentences half truism and half paradox. Among these, proofs of gentility and good breeding lie in a species of courage which is common to a cur; a readiness to attack, and an impatience to be caught or corrected. But in few countries are there truer gentlemen, if that character can exist independent of high cultivation, and unadorned by the fine arts. The ladies have thrown most lustre upon Ireland. Miss Brooke,[1] Mrs. O'Neill, Mrs. Tighe, Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Edgeworth, have lived, I believe, mostly in that country. Swift and Burke, and Sterne and Goldsmith, were properly English; for if we speak rationally and worthily of mind, we are to trace by what

[1] Charlotte Brooke, died 1793, published *Reliques of Irish Poetry*. Mrs. Tighe (Mary Blackford) wrote *Psyche* and other works. Mrs. Hamilton wrote *Memoirs of Agrippina* (1811).

methods and whence it drew its lineaments, by what associates or rivals it was excited, by what events it was modified, by what encouragements it was fostered. Men possessing it are to be looked for in their works and their societies; not among parish-registers and vestry-rooms.

*Page* 25.—"[Had the benevolent and enlarged mind of Mr. Fox directed their councils, during the twenty years preceding his death, this narrow system would not have prevailed, but Ireland might have been really united, by the firm bonds of gratitude and interest, to Great Britain. The state of things arising in Europe required the most enlightened and improved policy in English statesmen. The coercive energy of the new military government in France was alone to be counterpoised, and met, on the part of these islands, by a still more vigorous spirit, produced by the conscious possession of civil rights, and a renovated constitution.] To enter the lists with the great military chieftain of the French, without similarity of means or situation, has proved a want of knowledge of England's true strength,"[1] etc.

Rome had not the same situation or means as Carthage, yet she warred against Carthage, and successfully. No knowledge of her true strength was wanting. It is *because* our means and situation are different from those of France, that we have not suffered more from her, that we might have

[1] The sentence ends: "rather than the foresight of wisdom."

suffered less, that we could have laid nearly all the sufferings on her side. Military writers—I mean writers who were military men—recommend a diversity of weapons, such as the enemy is not expert in, or prepared for. We were *forced* "to enter the lists with the great chieftain": the moment we leave those lists we shall have nothing to which we can return. Horrible as the idea is, this is truly a *bellum internecinum*, if not between England and France, between England and Napoleon Bonaparte. I do not deny that we *might* have been safe at peace with him, but under our present system we could not. A minister will find it as difficult to abandon as to pursue. It must crumble to pieces of itself; it cannot be repaired nor taken down. The superstructure is extensive and cumbrous, the foundation narrow and weak. Like other heavy and disproportioned bodies, while it continues in motion it keeps together; the instant of its cessation is that of its dissolution. Whether good or evil is the probable result, it were more curious than prudent to inquire. Weak reasoners and shallow politicians, to whose bounded view commercial distresses appear like national disabilities, let them be aided in the attempt by all the natural restlessness of men left naked after carousing, will never make the people of England seek an inglorious, ignominious security, in a second

reliance on so perfidious an enemy. Changes of government did not, amidst all the turbulence of the French nation, promote or retard its movements against the coalesced powers, and are likely to have still less influence on us.

*Page* 26.—"Mr. Pitt treated Ireland like a conquered country."[1]

He did worse. He pensioned and ennobled the vilest rascals of every province, of every county, almost of every town and hamlet. Not content with this indignity and insult, fellows in whose family there never was a gentleman, a scholar, or decent member of society, were sent from England into their house of lords. How many brave men, and Irishmen too, had fought her battles and bled for her, without any distinction bestowed on them even from the ribbon-shop, while iniquitous lawyers and insolent tradespeople received the highest honours of the state! While a Nelson was lingering in poverty, and soliciting only those hardships and sufferings which were to work out the salvation of his country, a blanket-maker and the bastard of a scullion were ennobled. The former took the true Irish title of Cloncurry, the latter the Arcadian one of Riversdale.[2] We

[1] Trotter proceeds: "And chose to build upon the hollow submission of slaves, rather than strengthen himself by the support of free men."

[2] Robert Lawless, the father of the first Lord Cloncurry, began life as an errand-boy in the shop of a Dublin woollen draper. His son

must travel into the wastes of Poland to find so rotten and rude an image of aristocracy. In addressing a foreigner of distinction, I could not help making this difference: in Poland every thing was noble that was *not* a slave, in Ireland every thing that *was*.[1] Is it then aristocratical pride of which Mr. Pitt is to be accused? What democrat, however rancorous and malicious, could more effectually debase nobility? But these upstarts who were ushered into the Irish house of lords were very rich. Many people would willingly be very rich, without a premium for the trouble of being so. Here I may, and do most gladly, commend the conduct of Mr. Fox. He raised men of ancient or distinguished family to the peerage; a thing which is never invidious even to those who possess not that advantage. This alone proves how great the difference is, in the public estimation, between those who have scraped up money from all quarters, and those whose consequence has *a local habitation and a name*; who are conspicuous in the country; whose families are seen somewhat separate from others,

Nicholas was created a baronet in 1776, and a peer in 1789. In 1799 he wrote to the Duke of Portland: "If I have obtained any honours they have cost me their full value." Colonel William Hull, who took the name of Tonson, was created Baron Riversdale in 1783. This peerage is extinct.

[1] The same remark is made in Landor's imaginary conversation (never reprinted) between Lord Mountjoy (afterwards Earl of Blessington) and Lord Edward Fitzgerald.—See Madden's *Lady Blessington*, ii. 426.

and remembered individually; who set examples of agricultural improvement; who promote healthy industry and honest independence, cleanliness and comfort, competence and sobriety. A great leader in the cause of parliamentary reform, until he became one who might have promoted it, abandoned so far the errors of democracy, that, when he was appointed first lord of the admiralty,[1] and old captains of the navy waited on him, he would not invite them or permit them to be seated. This is a piece of impudence and hardness of heart (ever inseparable!) to be credited only by those who know the man. How different from the urbanity, and right feeling, in social life, of Mr. Fox!

*Pages* 26–7.—"[I can truly testify that in the shocking times of 1798, and during the degrading scene which crowned them, Mr. Fox yearned over Irish misfortunes with a truly paternal heart. . . . I distinctly recollect the horror excited in him, on hearing of the burning of cottages and their furniture by the military, and the pain he felt on reading the accounts of the actions between the insurgents and the army. How well I remember the valuable cautions he gave me, when the acuteness of my feelings for a suffering country prompted hasty and momentary expressions of anguish! His opinion, which is given in one of the letters annexed to this volume, when the Union was

[1] This must refer to Lord Howick, afterwards Earl Grey, First Lord of the Admiralty in the Ministry of all the Talents.

agitated in Ireland, will be found solid and important.] I do not take upon me to assert that his opinion went so far as to imply the re-admission of Catholics to the parliament of their country."

Yet his opinion went so far as to countenance a revolt, if they found themselves strong enough, on withholding from them their natural and just rights. Is a man unfit for jurisprudence or tactics, because he believes what those forefathers of ours believed, who framed for us whatever is most valuable in our constitution, and acquired for us that glory and renown in war, and nourished and disciplined us to that prowess, without which a set of commissaries and contractors and shop-keepers must have debated somewhere else whether the descendants of these brave men should be permitted to utter their sentiments in parliament? Are the debates in that house likely to be about no other matters than religion? and if Catholics think erroneously on that subject, must they think erroneously on all? But whether on this or any other, what danger is there that they will constitute a majority?

## CHAPTER V

### VISIT TO THE CONTINENT

Fox as a historian—Compared with Sallust—Fox's visit to France—The lessons of history—Fox and Bonaparte—Voltaire on Machiavelli—An incident at Calais—Arthur O'Connor—Sir Francis Burdett—In Flanders—Empress Catharine of Russia—The tree of Liberty—Rights of man.

[*Page* 29.—"The peace, or rather the truce, of Amiens, in 1802, very naturally excited in Mr. Fox a desire to visit the Continent. His historical work had advanced a good way, but, as he approached the reign of James II., he felt a want of materials which he understood could alone be supplied in Paris, and he determined to go there. That work has since appeared, and the public have formed their opinion upon it. I do not hesitate to say that it would have been desirable that he had gone further back, or chosen a larger period, and one unconnected even by analogy with modern politics. An involuntary association of ideas and feelings . . . may have had an influence, unsuspected by the author, and have led to his dwelling, as it has appeared to some, with prolixity upon peculiar passages in the unhappy reigns of Charles and James."]

*Page* 30.—"The goodness of his heart and the grandeur of his mind, the just medium of his opinions between the crown and democracy, and

his warm love of true and rational liberty are, however, indelibly recorded in a work which perhaps came out too soon after his death to be justly appreciated."

The histories of Sallust and Livy came out before the death of their authors, and at a time when party was more violent, leaders more powerful, and changes more stupendous, than we have witnessed in our country; yet the productions of these men were appreciated in their times as easily and highly as in ours. If we except a pristine vigour of style, a masterly and rapid delineation of character, a display of eloquence, like the *annona*[1] given to the Roman people, magnificent but unostentatious; and, instead of all this, bring before us a man complaining of degeneracy, luxury, intemperance, immodesty, and gaming, and of corruption flowing into public life from all these separate channels, and presently see him rioting or reposing on every one successively, we shall discover no obscure, or faint, or partial resemblance between Sallust and Mr. Fox. Sallust, of all the Romans, is the one who impresses me most with the idea of a great genius. Undoubtedly his work was laboured, but we cannot discover in it the separate strokes of labour. He is said to have affected an antiquity of phrase, more

[1] The corn and other provisions sold at a cheap rate to the poor in the latter days of the Roman republic, and given freely under the emperors.

probably of orthography; but his language has all that harmony which predominant sense strikes out. I could as easily find it in the verses of Racine as in the history of Mr. Fox. Sallust was very impartial. It is owing to him that in schools and colleges Cato is not merely the rival, but the superior of Cæsar. He appears to equal him in eloquence, and to surpass him in dignity. We may leave to Cato all of his integrity; but in literary, in political, in military resources, in forbearance, in clemency, and I think also in the justice of his cause, Sallust might fairly have represented him as secondary to Cæsar. Mr. Fox falls infinitely short of that impartiality. That Charles, who sold his country to the French king, descended to the grave without first mounting the scaffold, is an eternal reproach to the English name; but it is no reproach to Charles that he ordered those who attempted it to execution.[1]

*Pages* 30-31.—"[I was wandering among the beauties of North Wales, when a letter from Mr. Fox reached me, stating his intention of going to France, in furtherance of his historical work, and adding that I could be of use in copying for him in Paris. . . . The friendly eye which had penetrated these recesses and the hand which had

[1] Of Charles II. Fox wrote: "I doubt whether a single instance can be produced of his having spared the life of any whom motives, either of policy or revenge, prompted him to destroy."—*Reign of James II.*, p. 62.

beckoned me to leave these calm and rural haunts, to behold a new order of things in the powerful kingdom of France, were recognised by me as heralds of friendship and beneficence; but his active benevolence manifested on this occasion filled me with grateful surprise. Reader, such a character was Mr. Fox!] To raise up the neglected, and aid those whom scanty means might keep pining at home, or languishing in obscurity, was his bright characteristic."

What latent talents did he bring forward? The least he could do was to have taken care that those who lay three in a bed[1] should have been tolerably clean, but he took no care about that matter.

*Page* 36.—"[As the packet passed through the glittering waves with a brisk and easy motion, my mind was suspended, as it were, between various sensations and ideas. We had left the proud coast of Albion to visit the regenerated kingdom of France. The long-enjoyed power of the Bourbons had vanished before the irresistible course of events.] We were about to change our imaginations and opinions for certain ideas; we were to judge for ourselves, and, disencumbering our minds of the false impression unavoidably made on those distant from the theatre of a great revolution, we were to be enabled to form a just opinion of effects, and to examine and analyse causes [in the political or moral sphere of men, or, as I may now express it, of Imperial France.[2]]"

[1] See footnote, p. 53.

[2] Trotter is describing the journey of Mr. Fox and himself to France in the summer of 1802.

Here are so many words that I cannot get into the middle of them or see through them in any way. What certain ideas did Mr. Fox or his party give in exchange for their imaginations and opinions? These, it appears, were to be exchanged for something, and I can easily think any thing an equivalent. Did they not judge for themselves before? and for the people, too? But they were aware, it comes out, that they still had to disencumber their minds of false impressions. "To analyse causes" was beyond their power; but to "form a just opinion of effects" was certainly much wanting to Mr. Fox, who had reasoned wrong on them in every period of the revolution.

*Page* 38.—"[. . . Mr. Fox's feelings respecting Bonaparte. Raised himself, as I think, upon a greater eminence, he could not, as I did, look with the same astonishment at the stupendous character of that great man; but he could not be devoid of a desire, common to us all, of seeing and hearing one of the most eminent persons of the age.] He, to whom the histories of Greece and Rome were so familiar, looked with a philosophic eye upon his (Bonaparte's) exaltation."

It is a pity that men to whom these histories are so familiar should read them for no other purpose than to improve their knowledge of the language, or to amuse them, rather than to

instruct them, in the difficulties of state. How little advantage has been derived to Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox from the experience of past ages! Mr. Pitt,[1] indeed, had as profound a contempt for literature and literary men as ever was avowed or felt by Attila and Totila; but Mr. Fox was a man of extensive and not superficial reading, and, on many occasions, of serious and of deep reflections. The historians of Greece and Rome present to us almost every possible contingency, a narrative of almost every experiment, and a statement of every result. It requires too large a portion of human life for a person of active and official employment to examine into and deliberate on all: a man of sagacity, not even equalled by any of these great writers, has detailed them all, most clearly and completely. Mr. Fox was a lover, it is said, of Italian literature[2]; and surely no man of letters could read with haste or indifference the works of Machiavelli. His two comedies, highly praised by Voltaire,[3] I pass over as very

[1] Speaking of William Pitt, Mr. Lecky says: "In the disposal of his vast and varied patronage, no minister showed himself more perfectly and uniformly indifferent to the interests of science and literature." The same writer describes Pitt as "quite without Fox's power of casting off the ambitions of politics, and finding in books a sufficient aliment for his nature."—*History of England*, v. 347-8.

[2] "For God's sake," Fox wrote to FitzPatrick from Florence, on September 22, 1767, "learn Italian as fast as you can, if it be only to read Ariosto."

[3] "Few have hesitated," says Hallam, "to place Machiavelli's *Mandragola* and *Clitia* above Ariosto's comedies."—*Literary History*, i. 439. Macaulay thought the *Mandragola* inferior only to the best of Molière.

vile productions, and find little to commend in the life of Castruccio Castracani. I never smiled at the witty things attributed to him, and attributed to others long before; but surely *The Commentary on Livy* and *The Prince* are the two most valuable gifts a mortal ever bestowed on his fellow-creatures. If you will surrender your rights and liberties, look into these books, and you will see the consequences. A prince, to fulfil his destinies, must pursue this line of conduct. The cases and changes which may occur, and influence the fate of nations, are, in my opinion, quite as worthy of our study as those which are propounded by Hoyle for the game of whist. Ministers of a great nation should be chosen neither drowsy from the gaming-houses nor fresh from the university. The historian of Florence was not only a speculative politician, but he wrote also on the practice and stratagems of war. He first, amongst the moderns, recommended the general use of infantry, and pointed out its superiority to cavalry. Most of his remarks on these subjects are borrowed from the ancients: the Chevalier de Folard,[1] in criticising him, should

Voltaire said: "La seule *Mandragore* de Machiavel vaut peut-être mieux que toutes les pièces d'Aristophane."—*Œuvres*, 1785, xviii. 99. Landor, in his *Imaginary Conversations*, makes Alfieri say: "The great Machiavelli is, whatever M. de Voltaire may assert to the contrary, a coarse comedian."—*Works*, iv. 272.

[1] Landor wrote, in his *Letters to Lord Liverpool*: "An attentive perusal and a right understanding of two excellent books have enabled

have remembered this, as also the use of the pike, which he strenuously advises. The Chevalier himself has recommended these after him, and places a higher value on the skill, and arms, and military machines of the Romans than on those of modern war. Bonaparte has made himself emperor by following their maxims. The right use of a sensible book has produced the conquest of Europe. We English seem to have abandoned all stratagems and expedients: we try nothing new but strings and tassels; we recur to nothing old but whiskers.

[*Page* 40.—"An incident occurred at Calais, which, as it excited much remark, and roused a good deal of censure at the time, I shall advert to more at length than would otherwise be necessary. It happened that Mr. Arthur O'Connor[1] had arrived at the inn at which we stopped. . . . He waited on Mr. Fox, was received by him with that

a petty officer of artillery [Bonaparte] to confound all the wisdom and baffle all the energies of the world. *The Prince* of Machiavelli, and the translation of Polybius by Folard, are the cup and wand of this Comus," p. 71. The Chevalier de Folard's *Commentary on Polybius* is printed in the seventh volume of a translation of Polybius (Amsterdam, 1753), made by V. Thuillier, a kinsman, probably, of Landor's father-in-law. M. de Folard served with distinction in the French army, and died in 1752. Gibbon says he treated the subject of ancient machines with great knowledge and ingenuity (*Decline and Fall*, i. 152 n.).

[1] Arthur O'Connor, Irish patriot, was tried at Maidstone, in May, 1798, on a charge of high treason, along with James O'Coighy and others. Fox, Lord Moira, and Sheridan were among the witnesses called for the defence. O'Connor was acquitted, but remanded to custody on other charges. He was afterwards allowed to leave the country, on disclosing his plans, and went to France, where he married a daughter of Condorcet.

urbanity and openness which distinguished him, and was invited to dinner by him, which invitation he accepted of. I had never seen this gentleman before. It is well known that, after a long confinement at Fort George, he, and some other Irish gentlemen, agreed with the Irish Government to expatriate themselves for life. Mr. O'Connor was now on his way to Paris accordingly, when chance brought him to Quillac's inn, at the same time with Mr. Fox."]

*Page* 41.—" [Perfectly unconnected with government, and travelling as any other English gentleman of noble birth, Mr. Fox found no difficulty in receiving this gentleman (whom he had known before he was so deeply implicated in Irish politics) with a friendly and consoling welcome.] Mr. O'Connor dined with us [and I, for one, was much pleased with his deportment and appearance, though] I could not become, *in a manner*, a convert to his *arguments* to prove that he and his party had not attempted [or desired] to rouse the physical strength of his country, to effect a change in Ireland."

In *what manner* not become a convert to the arguments? What *arguments* were necessary? Did he deny the *fact*? Who can hesitate to believe that he did desire to raise the physical and every other strength of the country to effect a change in Ireland? Can any honest man blame him, if, when all other means had first been tried, he tried the courage and constancy of the people to *effect a change*? Were not rights withholden

from Irishmen, as precious to them as those which, being withholden from the Americans, roused *their* physical strength, the exertion of which was applauded by Mr. Fox? What defence then is necessary to this gentleman, if he received a former friend who suffered for principles like his own? It required no dignity or benevolence to act as he did; to have acted otherwise would, to him at least, have been extremely base, a species too of baseness very uncongenial with his character. It would have been a kind and a degree of unmanliness to be found only under the frozen temperature of such a soul as Pitt's.

*Page* 43.—"[A recent speech of a celebrated baronet has recalled to my mind what we heard either at Calais, or some other French town, relative to Sir Francis Burdett.] It had been reported to us that Sir Francis, on landing at Calais, had been designated, with a design to flatter him, as the friend of Mr. Fox, and that he had turned round and instantly corrected the expression, by saying 'No, that he was *l'ami du peuple.*'"

Sir Francis Burdett is not censurable for choosing to rest his claim to respectability on his own basis. Mr. Fox and Sir Francis might have been friends, and yet Sir Francis might prefer some other designation than merely the friend of Charles Fox.

*Page* 43.—["The baronet in a late speech has said: 'he is not the friend of Cæsar or of Pompey,

but the friend of the people.' I had the pleasure of meeting him at St. Anne's Hill, before he had attained any of his subsequent celebrity. I then thought him pleasing, though tinged with vanity, which, perhaps, in the society of Mr. Fox, was more peculiarly conspicuous, because the powerful lustre of his great, yet unassuming character rendered the tinsel glare of any superficial pretensions strikingly obvious. . . . I own that when I heard this 'disclaimer' at Calais, I was not led to entertain a more elevated idea of Sir Francis Burdett's character than I had originally conceived."]

*Page* 45.—"[Was not Fox an honourable and dignified friend, worthy of being assigned to Sir Francis Burdett?] Did it become him to turn and disclaim the title, in order to assume the *far less solid glory* of *l'ami du peuple*?"

So then at last the naked and unblushing truth comes forth, that the partizans of Mr. Charles Fox are strictly and exclusively his, and would rather both be thought and be so, than defend the liberties of their country. A great deal more is said about Sir Francis Burdett, of his vanity, his tinsel glare, etc. I have seen this gentleman, not among mobs, nor at public dinners, but in the society of his friends, and I observed no tinsel or vanity; yet these are sooner seen than any thing else about a man. I have mentioned what I saw; I think it just, and have neither the leisure nor the inclination to say, or to know, more of him.

*Page* 51.—"[On entering that part of modern France, so well known by the appellation of the Netherlands, the glorious scene of human prosperity, and of rural happiness and plenty which opened before our delighted eyes, was a true feast to the mind.] Flanders had long enjoyed a liberal portion of rational liberty."[1]

It was necessary that she should, otherwise she would sooner have swerved to the side of France. But no policy is sufficient to countervail the grasping disposition of despotism. Perpetual attempts had been made to strip little after little from her immunities.[2] Joseph, like Catharine of Russia, was a silly and restless meddler, eternally shifting and transplanting. Catharine might, on several occasions, have utterly destroyed the power of Turkey. But at one time a mere intrigue occupied her; at another she was driving a part of her subjects from their country and bringing another into it, or was quelling a revolt which such cabinet arrangements had excited, or her armies were pursuing those who took refuge in Tartary and China from her maternal solicitude. Instead of these tricks and finesses, she should

[1] Trotter proceeds: "Its independence, sanctioned and guaranteed by so many imperial sovereigns, had, until the reign of the visionary despot, Joseph II., given it all the just fruits of liberty, peace, abundance, and security."

[2] "The dismantling of fortresses, which took place through the policy of Joseph II., had, some years later [after 1795], a considerable effect in rendering the conquest of the Netherlands easy and rapid."—Lecky, *History of England*, v. 355.

have driven at once the brute force of her empire against the most powerful of her enemies; the less would be engulfed by the shock, and she might have picked up afterwards a thousand very valuable things, which would have been shivered in all directions by the general consternation.

[*Pages* 51, 52.—"As we approached St. Omer's, the difference between two very distinct races of men became very perceptible; and, after passing it, the gradation from French to Flemish was quickly lost in the latter. A larger bodily form, a manifest deficiency in grace, less intellect, but more plain sense, the dress inelegant and cumbrous—marked the Flemings. As yet I had seen but little of the French; but already their gracefulness, politeness, and the general elegance of their forms, had prepossessed me in their favour."]

*Page* 52.—"The general elegance of their forms." No nation in Europe is generally so ugly as the French, both in form and features. Such is the involuntary exclamation of every man who passes out of Kent into Picardy. Mr. Fox could see, and could teach others to see, something more than commonly pleasing in every thing like French.

[*Pages* 61–3.—"On leaving Cassel this day, I began *Joseph Andrews*. Mr. Fox was much amused by our book; and though we all subsequently agreed as to the vulgarity—a little too prevalent in Fielding's novels—yet his faithful and admirable paintings from human nature afforded us great pleasure. . . . We rattled along in a very

pleasant manner, going through Billeul, an ugly town, and some other country towns, and, with the help of *Joseph Andrews*, found not a weary moment. In most of these towns I observed the tree of liberty planted and growing. This memorial of the fury of late events recalled many unpleasant ideas. . . . In most places the tree of liberty, though undisturbed, looked sickly, and, as I cast a glance on its fading leaves, I could not but think of the sublime apostrophe made to liberty, in her last agonies, by one of the very brightest of France's ornaments, in her revolutionary days—Madame Roland. Yet the excesses into which the French were driven are not less entitled to pity than to blame."]

*Page* 64.—"The exasperation of the multitude seldom exceeds the boundaries of law and order, till they feel that their complaints are unavailing," etc.

This ought to have come into the author's mind when he was writing of O'Connor, and of the events in which he bore a part.

*Page* 64.—"[Yet the faded tree of liberty filled me with sorrow. I sighed over the inevitable result of the revolution in France, arising from the preponderance of bad men and turbulent factions.] The tree is faded, thought I, but the rights of man will endure for ever."

So there will always exist in the human mind the ideas of truth and equity, but we want to see truth and equity in some other places. Their being in the human mind and their not being

found elsewhere is the mischief. We desire to see them moving about, gaining strength, doing and communicating good. There is no nation in Europe which has not surrendered a great portion of its rights except the Spanish, and that nation has lost much of the territory over which those rights should have extended. For the recent avowal of her principles she will soon, under some pretext or other, be abandoned by our government, which gains nothing by experience but hatred of it, and brings nothing to liberty but regret.

*Page* 64.—"Dynasties may be erected, generals become monarchs, the people be depressed, but liberty is enthroned in the heart of man, is the boon of his Creator, and the cloudless jewel of life."

Mighty fine and precious is this cloudless jewel, if kings can pull it out of our bosoms, or cheat us, like ring-droppers in the streets, with something base and worthless instead. Liberty, to use a homelier phrase, is a thing which people may be so long without as to lose all appetite for it. This "throne of the human heart," on which the secretary has personified and inaugurated it, is often abdicated. Some prefer a tangible pension to what they consider as an imaginary being at the best; others, who have contemplated her more nearly, have been induced by the conduct of such people as Mr. Fox to

forego the trouble and peril of quarrelling about her infidelities. It is better, or rather it is less disgraceful, to resign a thing than to be tricked out of it. This sentiment is natural and universal. We are more willing to show the extent of our strength than of our wisdom. We retain with dissatisfaction what is left us by the unprincipled, and, with all the ardor and promptitude of desperation, transfer it to the powerful. In this frame of mind the indulgence of an angry humour is a sufficient reward for our sacrifice; after this we are obstinate in maintaining the power we have set up, lest others should reproach us with our rashness. The people of France are ashamed that they dare not resist their oppressor, and hate us from the bottom of their hearts because they know that we despise them for it.

These are feelings which will remain in full force so long as the cause of them is in existence, and, if ever we make a peace with them, they will employ themselves in playing only a short interlude before the last act. Yet persons who had, what they well merit, the infamy of calling themselves Foxites, are not ashamed to recommend one. Is this only a folly, or is it a base and sordid despair, which throws itself into the dust lest it should be trampled on; or is it, as I have often suspected, a plea to be urged in future for exemption from pillage and persecution? Were

I certain that Napoleon could invade this country, and equally certain, as I should be, that my property, no part of which is movable, would become his prey, still I declare before God I would rather endure the total loss of it than the ignominy of such a peace as he declares shall be imposed on England. There cannot be such miserable drivellers as to believe that his actions would be less atrocious than his threats. No power in the universe could keep possession of this island. Artificial heroes, patrons of hatters and tailors, generals who are helped on their horses by their rank, would be forced to retire from duties which they cannot fulfil; and, after the first gush and conflict of the political elements, every thing would rise or fall to its proper level. Men would go for their value; what is promissory would be nugatory, every thing sterling would be looked for everywhere, and held at a mighty price. Genius is the creature of necessity: when we wanted no better or braver men than a Pulteney or a Whitelocke,[1] we had them not; but when the voice of God is heard in the whirlwind men capable of governing will arise.

[*Page* 65.—"As we approached Lisle, I shut *Joseph Andrews*, and a new scene opened before us."]

[1] Generals Sir James Murray Pulteney, and Whitelocke. See above, p. 20.

## CHAPTER VI

### GHENT AND ANTWERP

Charles V. and C. J. Fox—A fatuous comparison—Gustavus Adolphus—Beguines—French annexation of the Netherlands—Importance of Antwerp—Street architecture—Fallen grandeur—Opening of the Scheld—Ship-building—Future prospects.

[*Page* 75.—"We entered Ghent. It is a large and magnificent town. The houses are lofty and venerable, as well from the grandeur of their appearance, as from their antiquity. . . . The scenery was well adapted for that wild, yet captivating species of romance writing which, from Mrs. Radcliffe's pen, produced so much effect. In Ghent, too, Charles the Fifth, that extraordinary character, uniting so many extremes in itself, was born and often resided."]

*Page* 78.—"Charles in his monastery and Fox at St. Anne's Hill were contrasts of the most striking nature."

So were Charles and the Vicar of Wakefield, or, if we must have a real and no imaginary character, Horne Tooke. A more instructive parallel might be drawn between two sovereigns, particularly if both had been successful in the train of politics. For instance, Charles V. and Gustavus Adolphus. Different from Charles,

and infinitely greater, was Gustavus Adolphus. Both were conquerors, both were ambitious, both were religious, and equally enthusiastic in their respective creeds. Gustavus died by the hand of an assassin, the Duke of Saxe-Lauenburg;[1] it was, however, in the field of battle. Charles's[2] end was pitiable, I had almost said contemptible. Gustavus's was consistent with his life. No hours of his existence were consumed in winding up watches or in dropping beads. A series of moral and religious duties formed the rosary which never left his bosom.

*Page* 80.—"We visited at Ghent a very interesting establishment, the residence of the Beguines. [. . . . I have seldom seen any thing more pleasing than this select religious establishment. . . . I think that in Protestant countries there is a strong and unjust prejudice against such societies. . . . I was very much gratified at beholding so many amiable and happy females, whose countenances spoke tranquillity and benevolence, and whose little mansions were the abodes of peace, comfort and decency.]"

I hope Mr. Fox experienced here the same

[1] Francis Albert, Duke of Saxe-Lauenberg, was "supposed by some to have killed Gustavus treacherously and dishonourably in the battle of Lützen [November 6, 1632]; or rather to have conspired against his life by giving some secret signal to the Imperialists during the heat of action."—Rev. W. Harte, *History of Gustavus Adolphus*, 3rd ed., 1807, ii. 305.

[2] The Emperor Charles V. died at the monastery of Yuste on September 21, 1558. Robertson's description of his life in retirement has been shown to be inaccurate.

sentiments as his friend; they are very benevolent and very just; and I do believe he did; for a part of his heart, in despite of dissipation and politics, was generous and sound. But, although he countenanced not a few superfluities in state, he was somewhat more strict with religion. The Beguines[1] are among the Catholics what the Moravian sisters are among the reformed. So that the secretary is wrong when he fancies that there is in protestant countries a strong and unjust prejudice against such societies.

*Page* 84.—"[Towards evening we came in view of Antwerp. . . . We had passed through the finest part of Flanders, in the time of harvest, and had, of course, seen it to the greatest advantage. . . . And all this fine country acquired by France: this vast acquisition of strength to her Empire, conferred on her by the blunders, and the blind fury of the allied Powers.] No consequence of the fatal *system* of *threatening* the very existence of France as a nation, among many lamentable ones, has been more injurious than that of the annexation of the Netherlands to that power."

We might have been the arbiters of Europe, we might have liberated, or encouraged the liberation of, the Netherlands from Austria; and

[1] "'By thy description, Trim,' said my uncle Toby, 'I dare say she was a young Beguine, of which there are none found anywhere but in the Spanish Netherlands—except at Amsterdam:—they differ from nuns in this, that they can quit their cloister if they choose to marry.'" —STERNE'S *Tristram Shandy*, chap. 264.

France would gladly have guaranteed their independence. She dreaded us, and us only, and there was a moment when her love of liberty was generous and sincere. Of all the cities she has conquered, Antwerp is the most important. Rome, Milan, Turin, Alexandria itself, are villages in the map of politics, if surveyed with Antwerp. On our side of the Alps hardly any city is comparable to it in the magnificence of its streets. Where London has one stately edifice, there are ten in Antwerp. In London there are not ten houses whose fronts are grand, or have indeed any kind of pretension to architectural beauty. In Antwerp there are some hundreds whose appearance is imposing and superb.

[*Page* 87.—"Antwerp was, however, as well as Ghent, a striking exhibition of fallen grandeur. The streets were silent, and grass grew in many parts: the busy stir of man was wanting to animate this immense collection of buildings; no roll of carriages manifested the opulence and luxury of the inhabitants, the sound of the human voice was little heard, and those animals attendant on man were not seen."]

"The streets," we are informed, "were silent, and grass grew in many parts." I have heard it asserted that the value of houses has risen since in a quadruple ratio, and that those bordering on the quay sold at from seven to twelve times as much as when Bonaparte came to the supreme power.

*Page* 88.—"[As the Scheld, however, was just opened, there were some symptoms of reviving commerce, and Antwerp has, most probably, ere now, assumed a lively appearance; although it will require a long time to restore the population, and give energy to the whole mass of this deserted, but magnificent city. The municipal officers waited on Mr. Fox, and we passed the day very agreeably in seeing every thing worthy of attention at Antwerp. . . . The Cathedral is very fine. We saw three good collections of pictures, and the academy of paintings. The French carried away Rubens's best pictures from hence, but two very fine ones have been returned. We did not see the citadel, which we understood was in a good state.] The idea of building ships and restoring the French marine at Antwerp, though in its infancy when we rested there, was however strong and prevalent."

When we consider that no place in Europe, not excepting Constantinople, is situated so favourably for communication with all the country in every direction round it, if we take also into account the number of forests, the level surface along which the timber may be conveyed to the rivers and the canals, the great population, the moderate price of labour, and the facility of provisioning a great force for a longer time than perhaps anywhere else in the universe; we may then compute the advantages which a vigorous and intelligent sovereign will derive from its possession.

## CHAPTER VII

### DUTCH NETHERLANDS

Breda—The Stadtholder—England and the Continent—Nelson at Naples—Prosperity of Holland—Commerce and industry—Evil of factories—Fisheries—Amsterdam—Republican Governments—Greek and Roman—Flight of the Stadtholder—Murder of the de Witts—Fox's humanity and indecision.

[*Page* 96.—"We entered Dutch Brabant on leaving the French territory. The roads became heavy and sandy, and the country quite uninteresting. We now had recourse to *Tom Jones*, and I read a great deal of that excellent work aloud on our way to Breda. Mr. Fox enjoyed it very much."

*Page* 98.—"Breda is remarkable as the residence of the English exiled monarch, Charles II. I viewed it with no respect on that account."

*Page* 99.—"The deserted gardens of the Prince of Orange (*ci-devant* Stadtholder) gave me another lesson on the fallacy and unsteadiness of human grandeur.] The Stadtholder, in residing in England, had abandoned his high station, which a truly great man would have preserved, or fallen gloriously resisting the incursion of the French."

I have nothing to say about the Stadtholder,[1]

[1] William IV., Prince of Orange, the hereditary Stadtholder, fled from Holland in January, 1795, on the advance of the French army under Pichegru, who entered Amsterdam in triumph on January 20.

whom no one ever expected to find "a truly great man;" but truly great men have occasionally left a country where irresistible force from external enemies, or the torrent of public opinion, came against them. Both were united against this poor wretched creature. Either would have mastered him. The Dutch opened the gates of all their towns to France, because our government and the King of Prussia stood in array against freedom. We have always made nations our enemies, to conciliate the insects of cabinets, which we have seen invariably, one after another, kicked and trampled into the dust. An example is now unfolding. The Sicilians almost adored us, but we countenanced and subsidised their oppressors; and for the service of two or three persons, no less weak than faithless, we shall soon encounter all the vengeance of a spirited and remonstrating people, not afraid, but unwilling to strike, who have been driven by nakedness and want to resume their natural rights.

Brontesque Steropesque, et nudus membra Pyracmon,[1]

will do something very disagreeable, and perhaps rude, to majesties and marquises and *eccellentissimi*. The days of hanging, on board of English ships, men who relied on royal promises and naval

[1] Virgil, *Æneid*, viii. 425.

honour, are all over.[1] Woe betide those who intercept or impede the just vengeance of an injured and outraged people. Sicily might be worth more to us than any of our foreign possessions, for with it we might possess the Sicilians. The politician does not measure countries merely by degrees of latitude and longitude; sugar and coffee and bales of merchandise are not his only goods. He leaves such imperfect estimates to such bare book-keepers as Mr. W. Pitt. "Concordiâ res parvæ crescunt, discordiâ magnæ dilabuntur,"[2] is an axiom he applies not merely to the natives of his own country, but to their agreement in friendly and equal intercourse with allies. To have a fellow-feeling in their interests is essentially necessary, and to provide that they do not *rot in cold obstruction*[3] from an arrogant and stupid king.

*Pages* 100–101.—"[The appearance of Holland, that creation of liberty, industry, and commerce, though a flat country, and quite destitute of the picturesque, is, however, most pleasing to any person of reflection and benevolence. . . . I cannot

[1] Referring, no doubt, to the execution, by Nelson's order, of Prince Francesco Caraccioli, in 1799, though he was hanged on board the Sicilian frigate *La Minerva*. Landor writes elsewhere: "What did Nelson? He tarnished the brightest sword in Europe, and devoted to the most insatiable of the Furies the purest blood! A Caroline and a Ferdinand, the most opprobrious of the human race and among the lowest in intellect, were permitted to riot in the slaughter of a Caraccioli."—*Works*, vi. 50.

[2] Sallust, *Jugurtha*, 10.

[3] Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, iii. 1.

quite accede to the poet's description of Holland.[1] . . . Commerce, when carried to excess, like most other pursuits of man, becomes pernicious, and productive of ill consequences; particular instances, too, of avaricious and unfeeling characters engaged in it may lead to an unfavourable opinion of commerce itself; but] if any one were disposed to deny its amazingly beneficial effects—commerce—he has but to look at Holland to be convinced that he is wrong."

Indeed, indeed, he ought to take a little more trouble, and to look in other places; at least, if a man is equally zealous to be convinced that he is wrong, as he usually is to be convinced that he is right. Commerce, in some stages of society, and to a certain extent, is useful and beneficial. Fishing, before ardent spirits were common, was an occupation hardly less laudable than agriculture, or less important to the strength and resources of a state. It invigorates the body, hardens the mind against despondency and danger, and employs great numbers in healthy occupations. In Holland, marshes were excavated for dockyards, canals were dug for track-schuyts, woods were cleared for timber, room was made for an accession of population, and food was provided in proportion to its increase. Sailors were now become hardy and enterprising; they

[1] Trotter here quotes Goldsmith's well-known lines in *The Traveller*, l. 299, etc.

embarked for distant voyages, they encountered difficulties, they contended and overcame them. Rivalry grew up, and foreign powers were anxious to participate in their success. Energy was called forth, and what was worth winning was worth enjoying. New means of defence and of attack were resorted to, opposition kept pace with them, and an industrious soon became a warlike, and a warlike a powerful, people. But the commerce which employs many thousands of the young,[1] in crowded rooms, extremely low, among the vapour of lamps, without fresh air and locomotion, and without any separation of the sexes, does mischief, the extent of which it would be painful and disgusting to detail. In a general and political view, its ill effects are palpable. It places many under the immediate controul of one, and assails the purity of election. In short, the commerce of manufactories will appear, on the whole, more prejudicial to virtue, to happiness, to health, to independence, than serviceable to the support of any well-regulated state.[2] We must not then be

[1] "The House of Commons," Landor wrote, in 1829, "has lately passed an Act, by which it is provided that children under *nine* years of age shall not be obliged to work longer than *twelve* hours in the day. Do not the wretches deserve to be stoned to death, who thus authorise the infliction of such hard labour on creatures so incapable of enduring it?"—*Works*, iii. 282.

[2] "Manufactures tend to deteriorate the species, but begin by humanizing it. Happy those countries which have occasion for little more than may supply the home consumption."—Landor, *Works*, iii. 117, where the first word is misprinted "manufacturers."

lavish and indiscriminate in the praises we bestow on commerce, since the species of it I have pointed out is noxious whenever it is extensive, and is more likely to be general than any. Every nation will be now obliged to employ its own hands, and one will employ them more extensively and perniciously than others, and will attempt to start before its neighbours, in a course which leads neither to its strength nor happiness. All nations possessing a sea-coast should extend their fisheries to the utmost. The fisherman has one perpetual harvest-time[1]; he employs no cattle subject to disease and inactivity, his fences are destroyed by no trespasses, and, if his hopes are disappointed, they are however not the hopes of the year. He has another field whenever he chooses to work it, and his profits are not anticipated by the tillage. If we take a general and political view of it, as we did of that species which arises from manufactories, we shall perceive that the nearer men are brought to meet invasion, and the greater number of them, and the more dangerous and enterprising their pursuits, a country will be the stronger and the safer.

[1] "A few years ago," Oliver Goldsmith wrote in 1759, "the herring fisheries employed all Grub Street; it was the topic of every coffee-house, and the burden of every ballad. We were to drag up oceans of gold from the bottom of the sea; we were to supply all Europe with herrings upon our own terms. At present we hear no more of this. We have fished up very little gold that I can learn."—*Works*, Globe ed., p. 398.

[*Page* 106.—"Amsterdam is a noble and populous city, and pre-eminent, I believe, above all others, for the general diffusion of employment, and the total absence of misery and want."]

*Page* 107.—"[ I could not have imagined a more perfect scene of human occupation and comfort; the equality of station, and the competency enjoyed by all, afforded that true idea of social perfection which theorists have written and talked so much of, but which few countries have realised in modern times. The distinctions of an aristocratic *noblesse* and a miserable populace, did not offend the eye.] The youth who studies, and the man who thinks, possess defective notions regarding states, and forms of government, until they travel. The republics of Greece and Rome are well known in history, but their glories and defects are no more to be discerned by the eye of the vigilant observer."[1]

If the republics of Greece and Rome are well known in history, how happens it that even the vigilant observer can discern neither their "glories nor defects?" What then is it we know of them? I have often fancied that I could discern some glories in the early times of Rome. Livy, and Polybius, and Plutarch, have recorded such things as make me acknowledge

Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.[2]

A little book, such as I could carry in my

[1] Possibly through an oversight, Landor transposes the last two sentences in this extract, which is here given as in the original.

[2] Virgil, *Georgics*, ii. 534.

coat sleeve, *Fenestella*,[1] will give me a short account of the magistratures, etc., if I want one. More great actions of individuals are recorded by even what remains of Livy than by all the English historians put together, and their institutions are as clearly set before us, and as fully, as those of England are in Blackstone's *Commentaries*. A greater number of profound remarks was made on the governments of Greece and Rome after they existed than during their existence. Aristotle has given a summary view of many, which were established in countries he never visited. Not only the changes and corruption which had deformed the Roman commonwealth before his time, but also the manners and customs of Germany, are described by Tacitus, the truth of whose description is corroborated by subsequent experience. Yet he never lived or travelled in that country. How many wise and admirable remarks are to be found in the works of Plutarch, and Polybius! I have mentioned these illustrious men before, yet I cannot refrain from repeating their names, and from expressing my regret that their works are not more studied in schools and colleges. If others have excelled them in style,

[1] A work entitled *De Magistratibus Sacerdotiisque Romanorum*, was attributed to Lucius Fenestella, a Latin historian who died A.D. 21. It is now believed to have been the production of Dominic Floccus, a Florentine of the fifteenth century. Editions in 16mo were printed at Geneva in 1599, and Cologne in 1607.

none afford such varied and such extensive information, or such an admirable detail of the means by which the greatest men became great. Mr. Fox, I suspect, might have derived more advantage from them than from his introduction to the first consul, or his researches in the Scots college, though the latter were proper for his undertaking.

*Page* 121.—"[Mr. Fox was very much pleased with the Hague, and with this wood,[1] which received admiration from us all. . . . We drove to Scheveling, on the sea shore. . . . Here the Stadtholder embarked when he fled. I believe Holland suffered nothing from his abdication, but when I stood on the shore] I could not refrain from despising the man who flies when his country is in danger; *unless* it be that he has governed it ill, and fears the just resentment of his countrymen, in which case I should have been glad to have assisted him into his boat."

*Unless!* Is he not quite as despicable in flying with all the consciousness of having governed ill? There is nothing in which I differ more widely from the secretary than in the sentiment that follows. Instead of helping him into the boat, I should think it my duty to detain him, were he flying from the just resentment of his countrymen, as I would a housebreaker or pickpocket in the same circumstances, if the country that afforded me hospitality demanded it at my hands. In

[1] The Haagsche Bosch.

doing this, he must first have violated the fundamental laws of the land, and must afterwards have left the remainder without an executive power. The Stadtholder had, in fact, brought an armed force of foreigners against Holland. The crime is capital. He was virtually outlawed; and it was the duty of every Dutchman to arrest him and bring him to justice.

*Pages* 122–3.—"[We saw one picture, however, at the Hague which, as it must fill any person with horror who views it, must derogate a good deal from my praises of Dutch moderation and calmness. I allude to the massacre of the De Witts. The death of these excellent men and true patriots is but too faithfully depicted in a small picture at the Maison de Bois.[1] It excited great disgust in Mr. Fox, and with great reason. . . . Among a thousand instances, this is one which deserves notice, of] Mr. Fox's admirable force of mind, equally reprobating the *direful* rage of the populace, as the vindictive cruelty of a tyrant."[2]

Though the *direful* rage of a populace never committed any one action so lamentable and detestable as the murder of the De Witts, yet the vindictive cruelty of a tyrant is still more

[1] The Huisten Bosch, a royal villa built in 1647 for Princess Amalie, widow of Prince Frederick Henry of Orange.

[2] "It was quite distressing to him," Trotter adds, "to speak upon the catastrophe of the De Witts. His countenance was full of horror at sight of the memorable picture.'

abominable, because more lasting and more systematic. So, if Mr. Fox reprobated them equally, he was injudicious and unwise. Let us rather say of him that he abhorred them both. Surely that is no very extraordinary mind, where such a natural and universal sentiment is adduced as an instance of its *admirable force.* Mr. Fox was a very humane man; yet by his negligence and indecision such actions were committed and ordered at Buenos Ayres, as produced the death of many brave men, infinite calamity, and indelible disgrace. Just enough of men for a sacrifice were sent also to Alexandria and to Constantinople. If all these had been united in aid of the Russians, many thousands of their army would not have met an untimely end, nor the war have experienced an unsuccessful one.

*Page* 124.—"[Mr. Fox's disposition taught him to govern at home with parental mildness, and always to conciliate and encourage, rather than terrify;] his genius led him to choose the grandest measures in foreign politics, and to make war short by making it decided."

Then his destiny crossed his genius; for nothing is more contrary to the actual events of his administration.

# CHAPTER VIII

## COMPANIONSHIP OF BOOKS

Readings in Virgil—Orpheus in the *Georgics*—A false note—The nightingale—Homer and Lucretius—The moral of a poem—*Paradise Lost*—Episodes in the *Æneid*—Lucan's *Pharsalia*—Virgil's pathos—Fox's favourite passages—Virgil as a politician—Grenville and the French Ambassador—Edmund Burke—*Tom Jones* and *The Arabian Nights*—Criticism of contemporaries—Dr. Johnson and Miss Seward—Fox on Ariosto—The shield of Achilles—Tasso—Ovid—Cervantes and the romance writers—Spenser and Dante—Alfieri—Metastasio—Greek tragedians.

[*Page* 89.—"If my readers can pardon the introduction of trifles, and my classical ones imagine the delight I felt at reading passages of the *Æneid* of Virgil with Mr. Fox, they will excuse my mention of another little course of reading on this short tour, on account of the valued name of him, unhappily for the world, no more. I had begun the *Æneid* at St. Anne's Hill previous to our setting out, and had advanced a good way in it before we set off. I continued my reading as opportunity allowed, and Mr. Fox never received greater pleasure than when I ventured to point out passages which pleased me. Of Virgil's *Æneid* he was a true admirer; and the tincture of melancholy which he thought ran through his work, was by no means displeasing to him."

*Page* 125.—"There was nothing lively at the Hague. . . . The want of political objects, I was

able very agreeably to supply, by continuing my reading of the *Æneid.* In this Mr. Fox joined with undiminished pleasure, and here we read the 10th book."

*Page* 129.—"The conclusion of the 10th book, the death of Lausus, and the resistance and fall of Mezentius, Mr. Fox did not fail very much to admire."]

*Page* 130.—"[In making the death of a tyrant so very unhappy,[1]] Virgil has shown himself an enemy to oppression and worthy the name of Roman."

Delightful is it to escape from the cabinet into the fields of literature. Neither our errors there, nor the enemies we meet, are at all prejudicial to the public good. It would have been propitious to the happiness, and to the fame of Mr. Fox, if he had cultivated them more assiduously, and never left them. Every man, I believe, is an enemy to oppression in *some cases*; and Virgil was, at all events, "worthy the name of Roman" in poetry. Never was verse more harmonious, sentiments more equi-distant from flatness and hyperbole, or touches of nature more true; still, contrary to what Scaliger has advanced, the passages which he has translated from Homer are inferior not only to Homer's, but to every thing

[1] *Æneid,* x. 833 *et seq.*

of his own. Even those celebrated lines in the *Georgics:*

Qualis populea, etc.[1]

will bear no comparison with the original in the *Odyssea.*[2] The story of Orpheus is admirably told, but the passage has many and gross faults The feelings are always right; the accompaniments not always. I shall follow the example of Mr. Fox and his friend in making some remarks on this subject; not echoing old exclamations of rapture, but pointing out what is bad, occasionally, and throwing light on what is obscure,

Ignoscenda quidem scirent si ignoscere Manes.[3]

Commentators and translators have imagined the Manes to have been implacable and unmerciful to the fault of Orpheus. On the contrary, they were appeased by honey and flour, and would most willingly, as Virgil means to say, have remitted the forfeit of the unhappy husband, if it had rested with them; but it was in other hands. At one time he tells us that *Proserpine* laid down

[1] Qualis populea mærens Philomela sub umbra
Amissos quæritur fetus, quos durus arator
Observans nido implumes detraxit: at illa
Flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen
Integrat, et mæstis late loca questibus implet.
VIRGIL, *Georgics*, iv. 511.

[2] Homer, *Odyssey*, xix. 518.

[3] Virgil, *Georgics*, iv. 489.

the conditions,[1] but just after he attributes them to Pluto.[2]

Septem illum totos perhibent ex ordine menses, etc.[3]

It is surely no extraordinary thing to lament the loss of a wife for seven whole months; but the poet adds, "rupe sub aeriâ." I wish he had not also added

Mulcentem tigres, et agentem carmine quercus.

There is nothing of poetry in it, and it shocks probability to no purpose. In Thrace there never were tigers. The coldness of the climate, which was formerly much more intense, would not permit their existence. It would be a bad defence to assert that by *tigers* he means wild beasts in general. If he intended this, he would have written

Mulcentemque feras, et agentem carmine quercus.

The hyperbole which follows is the admiration of all critics, who follow up admiration from tradition, but it is so violent and absurd, that Virgil must have produced it much earlier in life than the other parts of his *Georgics*:

Tum quoque marmoreâ caput a cervice revolsum
Gurgite cum medio portans Œagrius Hebrus

[1] Namque hanc dederat Proserpina legem.—*Ib.* 487.

[2] Immitis rupta tyranni fœdera.—*Ib.* 492.

[3] Septem illum totos perhibent ex ordine menses
Rupe sub aeriâ deserti ad Strymonis undam
Flevisse, et gelidis hæc evolvisse sub antris,
Mulcentem tigres, et agentem carmine quercus.—*Ib.* 507

Volveret, Eurydicen vox ipsa et frigida lingua,
Ah miseram Eurydicen, anima fugiente vocabat;
Eurydicen toto referebant flumine ripæ.[1]

This, it must be remembered, is a description given to Aristæus by Proteus; had it proceeded from the poet in his own character, the excess would have been more pardonable.

Qualis populea, etc.[2]

The poplar is not the most likely tree for a nightingale to build her nest in, and indeed it is probable that no instance of it ever occurred. She is always in "shadiest covert hid,"[3] and her nest near the ground. The beauty of the passage depends in great measure on our construing it to signify that the nest itself was *in* the poplar, though the first verse does not express it. But when we come to the words *ramoque* sedens, then we perceive at once the necessity of this interpretation.

So Philomel beneath some poplar's shade
Bemoans her captive brood; the cruel hind
Saw them unfledged, and took them; but all night
Grieves she! and, sitting on *the* bough, runs o'er
Her wretched tale, and fills the woods with woe.[4]

[1] *Ib.* 523. Landor makes Horne Tooke say: "The Homeric simile of the nightingale, and the silly tale of a head speaking when it was cut off and rolling down a river, and speaking so loud, too, as to make an echo on the banks, is puerile."—*Works*, iv. 235.

[2] See note [2] page 129.

[3] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iii. 39.

[4] These five lines are from a translation of *Georgics*, iv. 464–515, which Landor wrote in 1794, when he was an undergraduate at Oxford. He was then nineteen, and he was rusticated the same year. Forster

Sitting on *the* bough from which her young were taken. Dryden, Warton, Sotheby, and others in foreign languages, have translated the passage without its principal beauty. It is singular that Virgil, so attentive an observer of nature, should place the nest of a nightingale in a poplar, where it never builds, and should represent that bird as bemoaning the loss of its young aloud—

*Late* loca questibus *implet*—

when it ceases to sing, almost entirely, after its young are hatched.

I am convinced that nearly all of what Virgil has imitated from Homer were the exercises of his youth; and that those critics who would institute a comparison between the two great poets, act unfairly and unwisely by adducing these as points of it. The best translation that has ever been made from Homer is not among the many in Virgil, but was immediately before the eyes of Virgil in Lucretius. It is the description of the habitations of the gods:

found a copy of the translation, in manuscript, with the date. It was not included in the volume of poetry which Landor published in 1795, but was printed in *The Examiner*, October 16, 1841, with a note in which Landor says: "This has always been called the masterpiece of Virgil, and chosen as the ground of competition by translators. Wordsworth's, which is the last, is among the worst; Dryden's (who always compensates with spirit for fidelity) the best; mine, written at college, has small merit." The "Descent of Orpheus," as Landor calls the piece, was also printed in *The People's Journal*, January, 1847; in Landor's *Dry Sticks*, 1858, with a long note in which passages from the *Commentary* reappear; and, without the note, in *Works*, 1876, viii. 290. See also Forster's *Landor*, i. 38.

Quæ neque concutiunt venti neque nubila cœli
Pervolitant neque nix acri concreta pruina
Cana cadens violat, semperque innubilis æther
Obtegit, et large diffuso lumine videt.[1]

Dr. Jortin has highly praised these verses, forgetting that the original is in the *Odyssea*,[2] and is certainly the most admirable specimen of Homer's versification. Lucretius follows him closely, and it is only in the very termination that he is left behind. Λευκὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν αἴγλη is inimitable. It is a very silly and stupid business to talk of the moral in a poem, unless it be a fable.[3] A good epic, or a good tragedy, or a good comedy, will inculcate many morals; but if any poem should rest on one only, it would soon become tedious and insufferable.

[1] Lucretius, iii. 18. The lines are not quite accurately quoted. See also Landor's *Works*, iv. 95.

[2] Οὔλυμπόνδ', ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ
ἔμμεναι· οὔτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται οὔτε ποτ' ὄμβρῳ
δεύεται οὔτε χιὼν ἐπιπίλναται, ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἴθρη
πέπταται ἀνέφελος, λευκὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν αἴγλη·

HOMER, *Odyssey*, vi. 42.

In the *Imaginary Conversations* Landor makes Xerxes say: "The same singer who celebrated the valour of Achilles hath described in another poem the residence of these gods; where they lead quiet lives above the winds and tempests; where frost never binds the pure illimitable expanse; where snow never whirls around; where lightning never quivers; but temperate warmth and clearest light are evermore around them."—*Works*, ii. 54. Dr. Jortin, quoting the verses from Lucretius, wrote: "If any one thinks that Lucretius ought not to be placed so near to Virgil, let him try whether he can find better lines in Virgil than these."—*Tracts, Philological and Critical*, by the late Rev. John Jortin, D.D., Archdeacon of London, 1790, ii. 457.

[3] Much of this and the next two paragraphs was afterwards incorporated in the Imaginary Conversation between Southey and Landor.—*Works*, iv. 434.

Homer does not represent the anger of Achilles as fatal or disastrous to that hero; this would be poetical justice; but he shows the evil effects of tyranny in alienating a great and elevated soul from the common cause of his friends and country. In the *Odyssea* he shows that every thing yields to constancy and perseverance, but he does not *propose* to show it, and there are other morals not less obvious. Why should the whole machinery of the largest poem be brought out to establish a truth, which a single verse would inculcate more plainly and more memorably? In epic and dramatic poetry, it is action and not moral that is most regarded. The feelings and exploits of the principal hero should excite the principal interest. The two greatest of human works are here defective.[1] Agamemnon is leader of the Greeks in the expedition against Troy, to avenge the cause of his brother Menelaus. Yet not only Achilles, but Hector and Sarpedon, and Paris himself, engage our affections much more than Agamemnon. In the *Paradise Lost* no principal character seems to have been intended. There is neither truth nor wit, however, in saying that Satan is hero of the piece. It is Adam who acts and suffers the most, and on whom the result and consequences have most influence; this constitutes him the main character, although Eve is the more

[1] "I mean the *Iliad* and *Paradise Lost*."—Landor, *Works*, iv. 434.

interesting, Satan the more energetic, and on whom perhaps the greater force of poetry is displayed. The Creator and His angels are all secondary characters.

Must we not confess that every great poem hitherto has been defective in plan, and even that each has been more so than its predecessor? Such stupendous genius, so much fancy, and so much vigour of intellect, never were united as in *Paradise Lost;* yet it is neither so correct nor so varied as the *Iliad,* nor, however important the moral, so interesting or so attractive. The very moral itself is the reason why it wearies even those critics who insist on the necessity of it, and its importance is the reason why it is so perpetually urged and inculcated. It is founded on an event believed by nearly all nations, certainly by all who read the poem; it lays down a principle which concerns every man's welfare, and a fact which every man's experience confirms: that infinite misery may arise from apparently small offences. But will any one say that, in a poetical view, our certainty of moral truth, in this position, is an equivalent for the general uncertainty which is the leading character, the hero of the piece?

In proportions, in characters, in interest, in action, Homer is incomparable! It appears as if no epic poet knew or thought any thing about proportion. Nothing can be more *gibbous* than

the *Æneid*; it is, without exception, the most disproportioned poem in existence.[1] In others we are liable to be impatient of the episodes; here we are impatient of nearly all the rest. But the exquisite versification, the tenderness of sentiment, and the little descriptive scenes, produce throughout an unreluctant delay. There is somewhat of mild attachment to the poet in the midst of our aversion for his hero: and we love him the more the oftener we say we never can forgive him.

Had Virgil lived to finish the *Æneid*, still its radical fault could not have been corrected. The episodes are the best and principal part. This is so great an absurdity as to appear a contradiction. No proportions are observed; the hero's narrative is more important, and even more poetical, than the poet's; yet the effect is not dramatic. There is more variety in Homer, and more order. Achilles is an imperfect but attractive character. Such are most proper for poetry. It abhors whatever is measured, or uses such things merely for its vehicles. Cato was consistent, and Lucan was not without some powers, yet the *Pharsalia* is an intolerable burden. I say nothing of Addison's tragedy. His genius would not support him even in a farce. He failed in whatever bore an affinity to poetry.

[1] "The *Æneid*, I venture to affirm, is the most misshapen of epics, an epic of episodes: for these constitute the greater and better part." —LANDOR, *Works*, iv. 105.

Inequality of character is necessary to the sublime: in no period will that of Washington be so dramatic as that of M. Antony. Take away the inequalities of the Alps, and where is their sublimity?[1] Steadiness and uniformity are those qualities by which a man comes nearer to the image of his Creator, but we desire to see represented to us men who partake in our imperfections and infirmities. The greater they are in other respects, the more pleased are we; because, while we find that we resemble them in the little, we flatter ourselves that we may resemble them in the great. Æneas was a Roman of Virgil's own age. He was little better than Augustus. No people was ever so far removed from all our ideas of what is romantic as the Roman. Strange circumstances, and foreign climates, nurturing and forcing a peculiarity of growth, have sometimes, but not often, taken off a little from the squareness of their character. In M. Antony the scene and circumstances were romantic. Sudden and violent vicissitudes of fortune, and the predominancy of those passions to which in some degree every one is subject, and the excesses of which almost every one pardons, are the very things which a poet, if he cannot find, will feign. Sertorius, too, is contemplated in a country not less abounding in fable

[1] "Level the Alps one with another, and where is their sublimity?" —Landor, *Works*, iv. 91.

and romance than the garden of the Hesperides. Pelayo, Ruy Diaz, Cortes, have inspired genuine poetry[1]; and it will require but little time to remove whatever is common to others from Palafox, the hero of Zaragoza. Even now he appears far above them, and is surrounded, if I may use the expression, by a luminous atmosphere of his own. The bigots of faction have asked indeed what he contended for, and whether it were not for arbitrary power. He who conferred by his own authority the distinctions he thought proper, for services which he himself could best appreciate, was somewhat more than a partizan of a family. He could not but know that the poorest and most indigent defender of Zaragoza was more worthy of power and honour than a Charles or a Ferdinand.[2] But after all, wide is the difference between voluntary obedience to a legitimate and hereditary king, and cowardly submission to a vulgar and impudent intruder. Sentiments may not be founded on reason, and yet may be both amiable and grand; founded on honour they must be, to be either. A want of this disgusts us in Æneas; and those who praise Virgil for his judgment, praise him for that very quality in which he is more conspicuously than in any other the inferior of Homer.

[1] By Robert Southey.

[2] Charles IV. of Spain abdicated in March, 1806, in favour of his son, Ferdinand VII.

[*Page* 89.—"At Antwerp we finished the eighth book of the *Æneid*. Of all the passages relating to Evander and his son, Mr. Fox was very fond."

*Page* 91.—"The tenderness of Mr. Fox's heart manifested itself by his always dwelling, in poetry, upon domestic and affecting traits of character, when happily pourtrayed by the author."

*Page* 92.—"This classical taste and fondness for the tender parts of the *Æneid* endured to the closing moments of Mr. Fox's life."]

Mr. Fox with great reason admired those passages most which are most pathetic. In this and in the harmony of his verse, Virgil is, and will for ever be, unrivalled. To blame him or any other poet for his political opinions is absurd, unless those opinions take an undue share in his compositions. Then they are subject to the same censure as any thing else would be, doing the same. An honourable mind will pay nearly an equal tribute of admiration and applause to Sir Philip Sidney and to Algernon. My heart is as much with the one as with the other; my reason not. It appears to me, however, that the sentiments of Virgil were greatly more in favour of Julius and Augustus than of the old government, and I blame neither his heart nor his understanding. Pompey, and such venal men as the senate, were utterly unfit to govern. It is childish to blame an usurper; those only are to be blamed

who render it desirable or tolerable that any should exist. Cromwell and William III. were requisite to England, and France without a Bonaparte would have been desolate and undone. Usurpers retard the extinction of nations by the very animosities they excite; demagogues and political adventurers tend to hasten it, by the indifference they produce in consequence of their declamatory falsehoods and unstable conduct. The republic of Rome, with a Pompey or a Crassus at the head, would have been soon dismembered. Julius and his fortunate successor knew where to select such officers, both in war and peace, as give stability to power and constancy to fortune. It is grievous to recollect how many good and patriotic men suffered, and hardly less so to consider how many servile and corrupt escaped.

[*Page* 150.—"At Brussels, having finished the *Æneid*, our readings in Latin ceased."

*Pages* 155–7.—"Here we heard of Monsieur Chauvelin, who was said to live a retired life in Burgundy. The remembrance of this gentleman, in 1802,[1] brought with it many important considerations. Had Lord Grenville possessed the conciliating manners and enlarged views of Mr.

[1] Trotter means the remembrance, in 1802, of what took place between the Marquis de Chauvelin and Lord Grenville in 1793. On January 24, 1793, three days after the execution of Louis XVI., Grenville, Pitt's Foreign Secretary, notified to Chauvelin that his functions as ambassador, suspended for some time past, were now terminated, and that he must leave the country within eight days.

Fox; had the minister for foreign affairs in England, or the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was minister for *all* affairs, been capable of rationally weighing the events of futurity with intuitive judgment, and of viewing, with the benignant eyes of a true statesman, the effervescence and agitations of a long-oppressed nation; nay, had the ministers of the day, in 1793, possessed the hearts of Englishmen of the old school, they would have venerated the struggle for liberty, made by a sister nation, which had been long ridiculed and despised for its subservience to a *grand monarque*, and they would respectfully have said, every nation is free at all times to choose her own government. . . . Had such been Lord Grenville's language, on the momentous day when he ignominiously dismissed M. Chauvelin, what seas of blood would have been spared to France and all Europe!"]

*Page* 156.—"Had Lord Grenville possessed the conciliating manners and enlarged views of Mr. Fox," etc.

The sole views of Lord Grenville and his family have been to amass large fortunes. No means, public or private, have been neglected by them. Hence it is that these new people overtop all, or nearly all, the ancient nobility of the kingdom. Having said thus much, I shall not be accused of flattery if I deliver it as my opinion that he is a much wiser man than Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox. However proud and arrogant, he is not reluctant

to change a wrong notion for a right one. He is more calm than Mr. Pitt, more consistent than Mr. Fox. He has no unworthy favourites, in public life or private. His eloquence is never captivating, but always manly. He neither drags along the bottom the involved toils of Fox, nor allures with the false lights of Pitt. The propriety of his conduct towards the ambassador of France, and the policy of entering into a war with the republic, have been more than enough discussed. Burke, the only member of Parliament whose views were extensive, and whose reading was all turned to practical account, was more violent than even Lord Grenville for a declaration of hostilities. His unrivalled eloquence was fatal to our glory; it silenced our renown for justice and for wisdom, undermined our internal prosperity, and invaded our domestic peace. He was equally clear and magnificent in the development and display of his grand principles, but he hurried through passages which he never had explored, and the phantom he was pursuing struck the lamp out of his hand.

[*Page* 160.—"We left Brussels on the 17th of August, and found the day extremely hot; we recurred again to *Tom Jones*, and forgot the little inconveniences of the journey. We were now drawing to the end of our tour, and had been much indebted to the genius of Fielding for amusement and instruction."]

*Page* 161.—"[*Tom Jones* is also, with all his indiscretions on his head, far preferable to those much more dangerous personages in modern novels, whose voluptuous authors seem to conceive that libertine immorality, clothed in eloquent language, are sure to gain approbation and support. Mr. Fox was fond of novels, but not of the latter class. Their verbiage, and want of fidelity to nature, were sure to disgust him. I have read to him, at times, a great many, but none of this description.] In *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments* he delighted much."[1]

I have always had a strong and irresistible curiosity to discover what opinions were entertained on the first appearance of works which afterwards acquired the greatest celebrity, and have generally found that this celebrity has been of gradual and slow growth. In the correspondence of Swift and Pope, *The Arabian Nights* are mentioned with contempt.[2] Gray speaks in like manner of Rousseau's *Héloise.*[3] These works

[1] "And who would not?" Trotter asks. Landor certainly did. Writing to Lady Blessington on January 13, 1835, he said: "*The Arabian Nights* have lost none of their charms for me. All the learned and wiseacres in England cried out against this wonderful work, upon its first appearance; Gray among the rest. Yet I doubt whether any man, except Shakespeare, has afforded so much delight, if we open our hearts to receive it. The author of *The Arabian Nights* was the greatest benefactor the East ever had, not excepting Mahomet."—MADDEN's *Lady Blessington*, ii. 380.

[2] "And now, sir," Bishop Atterbury wrote to Pope, in 1720, "for your Arabian tales. Ill as I have been almost ever since they came to hand, I have read as much of them as I ever shall read while I live. Indeed, they do not please my taste."

[3] Writing to Dr. Wharton, in 1761, Gray said: "The *Nouvelle Héloise* cruelly disappointed me."

are perhaps read with more universal delight than any others, ancient or modern. Gray himself, and Cowper, the two most popular of our poets, have received abundance both of invective and advice from persons whose alacrity of zeal and weight of judgment are alike forgotten. It is amusing to look into reviews of literature, where a series can be found, and to see the remarks made at the moment, on Hume, and Robertson, and Goldsmith. They are treated as somewhat less than equals by the lowest order of literary men, and if any thing should be spoken well of, the commendation is followed by hints and suggestions; instead of deference and homage, they show encouragement, complacency, and favour.

Johnson seems to have fared better with these people in his lifetime. Since his decease, those whose age and poetry were equally in *the sere, the yellow leaf*, have treated him less respectfully; I mean a coterie in his native city, indulging that sickly and nauseating petulance, which finds in its ill humour a refreshment, if not a satisfaction, and fancies in itself, if not all its pristine vigour, yet a liveliness and spirit, when it is supported by patients of the same disease. Dr. Darwin,[1] a man of talents and a poet, is said to have countenanced this worse than folly. He was often

[1] Dr. Erasmus Darwin, physician and poet (1731–1802), author of *The Botanic Garden*, etc., and grandfather of Charles Darwin

a great latitudinarian in absurdity, but he never went so far, although very good-humoured and jocose, as when he told the too credulous Miss Seward[1] that she had "invented an *epic elegy*." In fact, no writer was ever less original or more fantastic. Her verses are bloated with expletives, and crowded with idle and incongruous images; and there is no other difference between her poetry and her prose than that her prose has somewhat more of stiffness and transposition to punish it for its escape from rhyme; there is about as much, indeed, as between the stocks and the pillory. Johnson, with a graciousness unusual to him,[2] and certainly with much violence to his nature, did actually conceal from her every harsher feature of his proud and provoked contempt. Such characters as his are to be treated with respect and deference; they can seldom gain any thing else; and surely a kind feeling is the least costly offering we can make. Every man of

[1] Anna Seward (1747–1809), a noted blue-stocking, wrote "Memoirs of Dr. Darwin," in which she claimed to have written the first fifty lines of his *Botanic Garden*. Landor's dislike of this lady is referred to in Forster's biography, i. 111. According to Landor, the feud began when his remark that he preferred a pretty woman to a literary one came to her ears, and it grew acute when she declared that nobody but the author of *Gebir* could have written the review of that poem in *The Critical Review*.

[2] "Madam," said Dr. Johnson, when Miss Seward mentioned to him *The Columbiade*, an epic poem by Mme. du Boccage, "there is not anything equal to your description of the sea round the North Pole, in your ode on the death of Captain Cook."—Boswell's *Johnson*, Globe ed., p. 653.

genius hears them mentioned with the same interest and anxiety as if they were his kindred. Reviewers and magazine-men, the linkboys and scavengers of literature, treat them like inferiors and dependents; and indeed no inconsiderable portion of their worldly welfare is affected by the representations of these men. Of late years, if any one had paid any attention to such people, one would imagine that Dr. Johnson was hardly on a level with Dr. Drake, and that Aristotle only kept a box for Mr. Fellowes.[1]

This reverend gentleman having settled religion to his mind, but unhappily—

> Castaliâ interdictus aquâ, interdictus et igni
> Pierio—

driven out from among the poets, is retaliating on them as their judge. He writes, or did write, for I know not whether the work survives his hand, in *The Critical Review*[2]; strange successor to the gentle, but high-minded Southey!

[*Page* 179.—"On the score of religion I perceived

[1] Dr. Nathan Drake (1766–1836), literary essayist and physician, published in 1805 *Essays illustrative of the Tatler, Spectator, and Guardian*; and, in 1810, *The Gleaner: a series of periodical essays.* His work on *Shakespeare and his Times* appeared in 1817 (*Dictionary of National Biography*). Dr. Robert Fellowes (1771–1847), edited *The Critical Review* from 1804 to 1811. He was an intimate friend of Dr. Parr, and one of the promoters of the London University.

[2] "The little man who followed you [Southey] in *The Critical Review*, poor Robin Fellowes, whose pretensions widen every smile his imbecility has created."—Landor, *Imaginary Conversations* (1824), i. 40. The passage is slightly altered in *Works*, 1876, iv. 22.

that he (Fox) did not merely *tolerate*, for that word ill applied to his disposition on sacred matters, but was truly *benignant*. . . . There never escaped from his lips one disrespectful word regarding religion; never one doubtful smile was seen on his countenance in a place of worship, or the slightest derogation from a solemn and respectful regard for all around him."[1]]

I have nothing to say on any man's religion; and indeed where a man is malignant in his words or actions, his creed is unimportant to others, and unavailing to himself. But I grieve whenever a kind heart loses any portion of its comforts, and Dr. Parr,[2] I am certain, felt the deepest sorrow that Mr. Fox wanted any which Christianity could give. Whether in the established church the last consolations of religion are quite so impressive and efficacious; whether they always are administered with the same earnestness and tenderness, as

[1] This is no doubt the passage in Trotter's book that suggested the following paragraph, which, however, appears to have been misplaced.

[2] "I have often remarked," Dr. Parr wrote, "that upon religious subjects he did not talk irreverently, and generally appeared unwilling to talk at all before strangers or friends. . . . Yet, from conversations which have incidentally passed between him and myself, I am induced to think that, according to the views he had taken of Christianity, he did not find any decisive evidence for several doctrines which many of the wisest among the sons of men have believed with the utmost sincerity and defended with the most powerful aids of criticism, history, and philosophy. But he occasionally professed, and from his known veracity we may be sure that he inwardly felt, the highest approbation of its pure and benevolent precepts."—*Characters of C. J. Fox*, i. 220. Trotter, describing the scene at Fox's death-bed, says: "Mr. Bouverie, a young clergyman then in the house, was brought in. Prayers were read. Mr. Fox was quiet and resigned, but evidently disliked speaking."—*Memoirs*, p. 463.

the parent church administers them, is a question which I should deem it irreverend to discuss. Certainly, he is happiest in his death, whose fortitude is most confiding and most peaceful; whose composure rests not merely on the suppression of doubts and fears; whose pillow is raised up, whose bosom is lightened, whose mortality is loosened from him, by an assemblage of all consolatory hopes, indescribable, indistinguishable, indefinite, yet surer than ever were the senses.

*Page* 170.—"[I must not omit to mention another book I read a little on the road, and at Brussels. I allude to the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto. Of this work Mr. Fox was excessively fond; and as I agreed with him in this partiality, the reading some stanzas, and conversing on the beauties of this delightful book, was another source of gratification not to be unnoticed in giving a sketch of our short tour.] Mr. Fox held Ariosto very high, thinking him equal in some respects to Virgil, and even his greatest of favourites, Homer."

Mr. Fox, in another place,[1] mentions Homer and Ariosto for "their wonderful facility and the *apparent absence* of all study in their expression, which," he says, "is almost peculiar to them." How that can be *apparent* which is *absent* I leave to the second-sighted, but I must remark that in

[1] In a letter to Trotter quoted on p. 143 of the *Memoirs*, Mr. Fox said: "Homer and Ariosto have always been my favourites: there is something so delightful in their wonderful facility, and the apparent absence of all study in their expression, which is almost peculiar to them."

poetry there are two kinds of facility, and opposite in their nature; one arises from vigour, the other from negligence. In Homer and Shakespeare we shall invariably find the best parts remarkable for a facility of expression. As the purest and noblest of the metals is also the most plastic, in like manner whatever is in poetry the noblest and the purest takes a "form and pressure" the most easily and perfectly.

Ariosto and Ovid are negligent; both are amiable, both are ingenious, both are good poets, but neither of them can aspire to the highest rank, or to any comparison with Homer. It appears rather strange that Mr. Fox should not have perceived this easiness in Ovid, and in Hesiod. The latter is a very indifferent poet, but he enjoys no inconsiderable reputation. His verse is the most fluent of all, yet his sentences are seldom harmonious. We read that he contended with Homer, and gained the prize. If they contended, this is not unlikely to have happened; for the second best has always more favourers than the best.

To write a description of a shield[1] is an idle labour, in which the imitators, and perhaps the

[1] Writing to Trotter from St. Anne's Hill, Mr. Fox said: "In Hesiod . . . there is much that is tiresome. Perhaps the work which is most generally considered as not his, I mean the Ἀσπὶς, is the one that has most poetry in it. It is very good, and to say that it is inferior to Homer's and Virgil's shields, is not saying much against it."
*Memoirs*, p. 495

predecessors of Homer, tried their skill. That of Achilles, in the *Iliad*,[1] being so admired, is a proof how much more conspicuous, and indeed attractive to the generality, are the blemishes and excrescences of a poem, than its action and symmetry. Poetry was more generally attended to in the age of Homer than in ours, and many would be anxious to know, exactly and minutely, what armour a goddess had bestowed on her son, since by that very armour he had reflected on their country the highest splendour of her military glory; so that a description of it, although no ornament to the *Iliad*, might be considered as hardly a redundancy or a fault. Pope and others borrowed their admiration of it, without possessing or knowing where were deposited the title-deeds on which it was founded. But it is better to be blinded a good deal by veneration than ever so little by jealousy.

But in the passage I have quoted there is surely a piece of pleasantry. Mr. Charles Fox, member of parliament for Westminster, and for several weeks, I believe I might venture to say months, one of the king's ministers, was pleased to entertain a high opinion of Ariosto, countenanced him as a person of real facetiousness, and admitted him occasionally into an equal share of favour with his *greatest of favourites*, Homer!

[1] *Iliad*, xviii. 474.

Ariosto is almost as far below Homer as he is above Spenser.[1] He may be ranked among the first writers of romance. His versification is very easy, but also very negligent. He bears no resemblance whatsoever to Virgil or to Homer, and comes nearer to Ovid than to any other of the ancients. But, although the language of Ovid is sometimes too familiar, it hardly ever is prosaic. There is always a something, however little it may be, which gives it the character of poetry. In Ariosto there are at least a thousand verses which have nothing to distinguish them from prose, except the corresponding rhyme; perhaps if I said three thousand I should not exceed the truth. The description of the palace of Atlantes[2] is a wonderful type of the French revolution. Could this possibly have escaped Mr. Fox?

There is in Italian poetry another passage so very curious and remarkable, so exact and complete a prophecy of the same event, that I cannot help inserting it, however much I would avoid quotations:

> La Francia, adorna or da natura e d'arte
> Squallida allor vedrassi in manto negro;
> Nè d'empio oltraggio inviolata parte,
> Nè loco del furor rimaso integro:

[1] Mr. Fox had written to Trotter: "I am quite pleased at your liking Ariosto so much; though indeed I foresaw you would, from the great delight you expressed at Spenser, who is certainly inferior to him, though very excellent too. Tasso I think below both of them."—*Memoirs*, 496.

[2] Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, iv.

Vedova la Corona; afflitte e sparte
Le sue fortune; e 'l Regno oppresso ed egro
E di Stirpe real percosso e tronco
Il piu bel ramo; e fulminato il tronco.

*Gierus.*, lib. 20.[1]

There is a splendid confusion in Ariosto, which makes his imagination seem richer and more extensive than it is. It certainly is not more vigorous nor more various than Boccaccio's, to whom he is inferior both in the humorous and the pathetic. I cannot but think him somewhat, though little inferior to Ovid. The latter has not only more of the true epic, but an equal share of that which Ariosto most excelled in—variety of subject and exuberance of fancy. His epistles abound in touches of nature, equally pure, discriminating, and true, and what they have been most condemned for, but which is among their highest merits, that sophistry of argument which follows inventive love, excusing its errors and exasperating its grief. In these, however, there are two verses which ought rather to have come into the mind of Ariosto than of Ovid:

Sic ubi fata vocant udis abjectus in herbis
Ad vada Mæandri concinit albus olor.[2]

[1] The reference should be to Tasso's *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, xx.

[2] Ovid, *Heroics*, vii. 1. "As if the Fates," Landor writes in another place, "were busied in 'calling white swans!' Ovid never composed any such trash."—*Works*, viii. 412. In a note, not reprinted, in the first edition of the *Imaginary Conversations*, he remarks that many modern critics believe the two lines to be spurious, and that some manuscripts are without them (*Imag. Conv.*, 1829, iv. 264)

The epistle of Dido to Æneas, which was perhaps a school exercise, and is certainly the worst poem attributed to Ovid, begins with this simily;[1] a most contemptible one indeed. Even such prose as

> Lungo sarà che d'Alda di Sansogna
> Narri, o della contessa di Celano,
> O di Bianca Maria di Catalogna,
> O della figlia del re Siciliano,
> O della bella Lippa di Bologna,[2] etc.

is rather more tolerable. This is utterly unnecessary, but the other is violently misplaced. Poetry has lost by similies more than it has gained. Where we find one apposite, we find several that tend rather to divert our attention from the object they mean to illustrate: if they are bad, they must fall short of it; if good, they may go beyond it.

No two poets who have written on the exploits of heroes, are so totally and universally different as Virgil and Ariosto. If there is a general air of melancholy pervading the poetry of Virgil, there is, on the contrary, a levity and playfulness of expression even in the most solemn and pathetic passages of Ariosto:

> Sospirando piangea, tal che un ruscello
> Parean le guancie, e 'l petto un Mongibello.[3]

[1] Landor's spelling. See the *Letter to an Author*, appended to the first edition of *Pericles and Aspasia*, ii. 333: "Is it not odious to use latin words anywhere for English: *simile* for *simily*?" etc.

[2] Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, xiii. 73.

[3] *Orlando Furioso*, i. 40.

Well might Cervantes ridicule the romance-writers. But Ariosto does not always rise with us into this terrific loftiness without leading us back again, and setting us down nearer home. For instance:

> Il liberal, magnanimo, sublime—
> Gran cardinal de la chiesa di Roma.[1]

I hardly know any book so pleasant to read in, or so tiresome to read through, as *Orlando Furioso*—of course, I except *The Faery Queene*. I will never believe that any man has overcome twelve or fifteen thousand lines of allegory, without long intervals of respite and repose. I was seventeen years in doing it, and I never did any thing which I would not rather do again.

In the gloomy deserts of Dante, some scenes are stupendous both from their grandeur and their solitude, and lose nothing of their distinctness by their elevation; in Ariosto, if there are a few misshapen ornaments, yet every thing around them is smiling in sunshine and fertility. No man ever lays his poem down without a determination to resume it, but he lays it down often and negligently. Let him once be under the guidance of Dante, and—

> Revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras,
> Hic labor, hoc opus est[2]

[1] *Orlando Furioso,* iii. 56. Written of Cardinal Ippolito di Este. See Landor, *Works,* iv. 118.

[2] Virgil, *Æneid,* vi. 128. Wrongly quoted.

He is determined not to desist; he may find another passage as striking as the last; he goes on and reads through.

It is remarkable and surprising that Mr. Fox, in speaking of Italian literature, never conversed about Alfieri. He was incomparably the greatest poet in Europe at the time of this journey, and there are not in the whole compass of Italian literature such exquisite specimens of poetical language and vigorous versification. He approaches more nearly to the manner of the ancients than any modern; never swollen like Tasso, nor prosaic like Ariosto, nor puny like Metastasio. If the fame of such a man cannot be expected to attain its full growth in his own age, neither can we find without astonishment that his productions were overlooked. He was a cordial hater of the French; he despised their morals, manners, government, and literature; he detested Voltaire, whom indeed he might have considered as an epitomy of that people; versatile, lively, vain, lying, shameless, unfeeling, unprincipled, and ambitious. A hatred of them on these grounds, or any other, might perhaps have not been countenanced by the liberal spirit of Mr. Fox.

[*Page* 171.—"I now regret that I did not take the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* with me. These works Mr. Fox preferred to all others of the ancient classics; and, were a choice to have been made, would have

yielded all to have preserved them. His letters show his strong admiration of Homer; and my readers will perceive in them, that he esteemed Euripides very highly, and perhaps preferred him to all dramatic writers; yet Homer was the great poet, with him, who included every beauty, and had the fewest defects in his work, of any ancient or modern genius."]

We are informed that he preferred Homer to the other classics. It would be better if we could discover in his taste something that was peculiar and discriminating; but not a single remark of that kind is recorded. That he estimated Euripides very highly is another piece of information. If, as is added, he preferred him to all dramatic writers, he deserves more pity than even that tragedian of pity ever excited. Euripides seems to have written solely for the purpose of inculcating some moral and political axioms.[1] Almost every character introduces them, and in almost every place. There is a regular barter of verse for verse; no credit is given, but the exchange paid down instantly for the commodity. These dogmas in general are miserably flat, common and unimportant, totally different from the striking sentences employed not sparingly by Pindar, which always come recommended by some simple and appropriate ornament, like images on days of

[1] Much of this paragraph was afterwards incorporated in the Imaginary Conversation between the Abbé Delille and Walter Landor. —LANDOR'S *Works*, iv. 122.

festival in the temples. Virgil has interspersed them in his works, perhaps with equal felicity, and it is among the principal excellences of Ovid. The dialogue of Euripides is in general dull and heavy, the construction of his fable infirm and inartificial, and if in the chorus he assumes another form, and becomes the poet, he is grossly at a loss to make it serve the interests of the piece. Aristophanes, who ridicules him in his comedies, treats him disdainfully as the competitor of Sophocles, and speaks probably the sense of the Athenians in the time of their finest taste for literature. He was not considered by them as the rival of Sophocles; but sensible men in all ages will admire him, and the more so because they will fancy they discover in him more wisdom than others have discovered; for while many things in his tragedies are direct and almost proverbial, many are allusive and vague, occurring in various states of mind and temperatures of feeling. But there is little theatrical or dramatic in his works, and his characters are more anxious to show their understanding than their sufferings. Euripides came farther down into common life than Sophocles, and he farther than Æschylus; one would have expected the reverse. In *Hecuba*, Talthybius calls Polyxena a calf[1]; her mother

[1] λεκτοί τ' Ἀχαιῶν ἔκκριτοι νεαννίαι
σκίρτημα μόσχου σῆς καθέξοντες χεροῖν
ἔσποντο'—Eurip., *Hecuba*, 515.

had called her so before, and in *Alcestis*, the best of his works, Hercules is drunk.[1]

It would, however, be unjust to deny that sometimes, for a page together, he is both animated and pathetic, but it would be equally or more so to strip the laurels from the recent tomb of Alfieri,[2] to assert that he elevates the mind, or softens the heart less frequently, that he has displayed fewer or fainter powers of invention, rendered less service to his language, or conferred less glory on his country.

[1] *στέφει δὲ κρᾶτα μυρσίνης κλάδοις*
*ἄμουσ' ὑλακτῶν.*—EURIP., *Alcestis*, 752.

[2] The monument to Alfieri, by Canova, erected at the expense of the Countess of Albany, is in the church of Santa Croce, Florence. Landor said of it: "His monument is unworthy of Canova's hand. It exhibits a small portrait of the poet in *basso relievo*. Little is said of him, much of the Countess."—*Letters of Landor* (1897), p. 44. Landor once met Alfieri, in a London bookshop, and spoke to him enthusiastically about the French revolution. "Sir," said Alfieri, "you are a very young man. You are yet to learn that nothing good ever came out of France, or ever will."—FORSTER'S *Landor*, ii. 68.

# CHAPTER IX

## MR. FOX IN PARIS

Hôtel de Richelieu—English nobility abroad—French marquises—English county gentry—Bonaparte and La Fayette—Moreau and Joubert—Pitt and France—The drain of gold—Meeting with Lord Holland—The *Théâtre français*—Racine—Pictures at the Louvre—Poussin—Fine arts in England—National gallery needed—English landscape painters—Gainsborough, Turner, and the Barkers—Climate and pictures—Rubens—Versailles—Louis XIV.—Fox no musician—Metastasio and Pindar—Meeting with Kosciusco—The Tuilleries.

[*Page* 184.—"It was not, however, without painful imaginations, that one approached the city of Paris. The recollection of the multitude of lives immolated upon the shrine of sanguinary ambition was almost appalling."

*Page* 188.—"Entering one of the Fauxbourgs, we passed through the triumphal arch erected, I think, for Louis the 14th, and shortly found ourselves at the Hôtel de Richelieu, which had been engaged for Mr. Fox."]

*Pages* 190–191.—"[Two or three of Mr. Fox's friends came to see him on the evening of his arrival: and in seeing this great man happy, and among his dear English friends and companions, the mournful impressions I had received upon entering the Hôtel de Richelieu, wore away. . . . Amidst all the ease of polished society, the in-

dependence of the Englishmen was perceptible on all sides. . . .] There is a noble air of liberty amongst the nobility and higher classes of Englishmen, which added to their other accomplishments, makes them appear the *most respectable of their class* in Europe."

The nobility of other countries is divided into two parts. For instance, the grandees of Spain are not merely the peers of Condés, etc. A certain landed property is requisite, which is unalienable, and must consist of many thousands a year. There were in Paris before the revolution several marquises who had not an income of two hundred a year each ; some lived as common gamblers and sharpers, and exercised their talents in this country afterwards. All those gentlemen of England[1] who have inherited from their ancestors for three or four centuries large estates would be classed among the nobility in the other kingdoms of Europe, and many of their families had once the rank of baron in their own. When Mr. Pitt was innovating, in his regular government as he called it, more than Marius presumed to do when he had trampled on the necks of the Romans, the

[1] In the *Imaginary Conversations* Landor makes Alfieri say : "The greater part of the English nobility has neither power nor title. Even those who are noble by right of possession, the hereditary lords of manors with large estates attached to them, claim no titles at home or abroad. Hence in all foreign countries the English gentleman is placed below his rank, which naturally and necessarily is far higher than that of your slipshod counts and lottery-office marquises."—*Works*, iv. 267.

few country-gentlemen remaining might have formed themselves into a separate class, and constituted a nobility more respectable and more powerful than his. Lords of two or three manors, heirs of three or four thousand a year for three or four generations, might have established to themselves that rank in the country which their families once possessed. They lost it by not being *called* to parliament at the beck of an arbitrary king, who conferred new possessions and privileges on such as were more subservient to his will. When republicanism was making such alarming strides as he represented, why did not the anti-phlogistic philosophers who sat shivering on their seats in the house of commons, take out of his hands those instruments of which he knew not the use and application; why did not the country gentlemen of England erect a barrier of property on a broad basis, against the flood-tide which he foretold would ruin their estates, and re-establish old usages in opposition to new opinions?

*Page* 193.—"[The various points of attraction in Paris irresistibly drew the mind in different directions. The new government, just rendered permanent and hereditary in Bonaparte, was presenting itself to the public eye. Under it, the stern republican and angry royalist were ranging themselves, unable to struggle against an order of things, emerging from that chaos of conflicting interests, which until now had agitated the interior

of France. The imposing character of Bonaparte, a warrior and a statesman of no common note, had acquired an ascendancy which he was admirably qualified to maintain.] You endeavoured, said he, to M. La Fayette,[1] on his thanking him for his liberation from the dungeons of Germany, to establish the solecism of a monarch at the head of a republic."

Bonaparte was in the habit of saying to those about him things which were *φωνάντα συνετοῖσι*.[2] A monarch, as we call a king, had existed in the republic of Poland.

*Page* 195.—"It was privately stated, that when Bonaparte returned from Egypt, and the change of government was in agitation, he] (Bonaparte), Moreau, and Joubert, had been thought of as fit heads for the republic."[3]

Joubert lost his life in the midst of his popularity.

[1] Lafayette fled from France during the Reign of Terror, and was arrested and imprisoned by the Prussians. In 1795 the King of Prussia handed him over to the Austrians, by whom he was kept in confinement at Olmütz. His case was the subject of a debate in the House of Commons in 1796, but Fitzpatrick's proposal that England should demand his release was defeated. He was liberated in August, 1797, at the instance of Bonaparte.

[2] Pindar, *Olymp.* ii. 152. The same words were inscribed on the title-page of *Odes by Mr. Gray*, printed at Strawberry Hill, 1757.

[3] Trotter proceeds: "That the latter [Joubert] had been nominated by the party who conceived that a military character was requisite at the head of the nation; and that after he lost his life in battle, Moreau and Bonaparte alone were those to whom the armies subsequently looked up; but the former was induced, by the latter's persuasion, to yield his pretensions to him. Without vouching for this, I cannot assent to the opinion that Bonaparte could have had any competitor of a formidable nature, either upon being chosen first consul, or upon his attaining the consulate for life."

Moreau was thought amiable, but was always called *sans caractère*. No man ever was so well formed to govern France as Bonaparte. He had associated in person with the vilest, the most unprincipled, and the most turbulent. He was chosen to fill his office as thief-takers are chosen for theirs: from knowing the haunts and habits of the abandoned and desperate.

[*Page* 198.—"I found myself in Paris, the seat of so many Bourbons, once almost adored, now blotted from the calendar of Sovereigns, and a new throne quietly erecting at the Tuileries; a new dynasty securely placing its feet upon the steps."]

[*Page* 199.—"Such were my thoughts,—I felt almost giddy at the view; the destiny of millions was arranging before my eyes; it was quite impossible for a number of Englishmen to meet, and to forbear saying, how astonishing!] What a business has been accomplished by William Pitt! [What a *friend* has *he* been to the fortunes of Bonaparte!]"

Yes, yes! without this incomparable financier, France would not have found gold enough in all her territories to make a crown of. This heaven-born minister showered it down on her like Jupiter into the lap of Danae.

*Page* 200.[1]—"The phenomenon of abundance of

[1] Trotter says (p. 199): "Another striking result, also, of the Coalition War awaited us in Paris. Here all was gold and silver. In London, a few guineas were with great difficulty procured from a banker, as a matter of favour; in Paris, the banker gave you your

gold and silver in France, and of nothing to be seen but paper in England—how should I have rejoiced that Mr. Pitt, accompanied by some vociferating members of parliament, or interested merchants, had been led to a Parisian banker's desk, and interrogated on this difference."

Why! they would have sworn it was either the last night's plunder by some jacobin, or, if any of Pitt's saints were among them, that it was some illusion of the devil. Tell them a truth, and they hate you; prove it, and they never forgive you.

[*Page* 201.—"As Mr. Fox found himself happily reunited to Lord Holland and his family, after a considerable separation, we dined with them, and in the evening went to the *Théâtre français*. Upon entering a French theatre for the first time, an Englishman finds a good deal to reconcile himself to. The want of a powerful light throughout the house, intended to give greater effect to the stage, offends his taste at first, but he will finally approve, if he be not determined to prefer all the customs of England."

*Page* 202.—"The piece we saw was *Andromaque*, in which Mademoiselle Duchenois, as Hermione, obtained and deserved great applause. The French declamation is at first rather painful to an English ear, and I think a less measured style,

choice—silver or gold, and both were plentiful: England having nothing but *paper*, and France nothing but *gold and silver*; a fact which spoke very intelligible language. How much should I have rejoiced," etc., as in Landor's quotation.

and studied tone, would much improve it. The unpleasantness wore quickly off, however."

*Page* 203.—"Mr. Fox enjoyed the French theatre very much; and as Racine was his favourite dramatic author, we went very shortly again to see *Phedra* performed at the same theatre."

*Page* 204.—"On this occasion he (Mr. Fox) was very soon recognised by the audience in the pit. Every eye was fixed upon him, and every tongue resounded Fox! Fox! The whole audience stood up, and the applause was universal."]

*Page* 202.—Here are some remarks on the French theatre very creditable to the taste of the author. The manner of lighting it is founded, not on parsimony, as some Englishmen think, but on sound knowledge of effect. Every actor is equal to his part; none seems to solicit applause, every one to deserve it. Human ingenuity could not contrive any thing so painful to the ear as a continuation of Alexandrines, a regular and rapid alternation from high to low, a pause at every sixth syllable; and French tragedy labours under this evil spirit, which no genius can exorcise, yet the actors in some degree seduce us from our sufferings.

Whoever takes the trouble of marking all idle or extravagant epithets in Racine, will be surprised at the number. A very large proportion of rhymes in the language are adjectives and

participles, which also in general form the cesura. This is among the principal reasons why it is less poetical than any other we know of, unless it be the Chinese; and if we consider that some of the poets, as we find in Ménage, collected the rhymes first and filled them up afterwards, and that it was the custom of Racine to begin with the second verse throughout, we cannot wonder that nothing grand, simple, or unlaboured is to be found in their graver poetry. I believe I read La Fontaine with as much pleasure as any Frenchman does, but his merits are quite distinct from his verse. Racine is a dexterous planner of dramas, but all his characters are French ladies and gentlemen, and all possess dispassionate judgment in the most arduous affairs. The celebrated line—

Je crains Dieu, etc.,

is taken almost verbally from Godeau.[1] The one preceding it is useless, and shows, as innumerable other instances do, his custom of making the first for the second. He has profited very much by the neglected poets of his country, and wants energy because he wants originality.

[1] Soumis avec respect à sa volonté sainte
Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai pas d'autre crainte."
RACINE, *Athalie*, Act I. Sc. 1.

Landor repeats this criticism in his Imaginary Conversation with the Abbé Delille (*Works*, iv. 120). Joseph Warton, in his essay on Pope (3rd edition, p. 91), quotes the account given by Ménage, in his *Observations sur les poésies de Malherbe*, of another theft from Antoine Godeau, Bishop of Vence, the culprit in this case being Corneille.

*Page* 207.—"[No one could be in Paris and not feel a powerful desire to view those productions of art and genius, the accumulated fruits of successful war. Shortly after our arrival, therefore, we hastened to the museum of pictures at the Louvre.] Mr. Fox smiled as he entered the museum of the Louvre, and seemed plainly to say, 'Here are the fruits of conquest.'"

My own feelings, I confess, were extremely different. I went, with impatient haste, to behold these wonders of their age and of all ages succeeding, but no sooner had I ascended a few steps leading to them, than I leaned back involuntarily against the ballusters, and my mind was overshadowed, and almost overpowered, by these reflections: Has then the stupidity of men who could not in the whole of their existence have given birth to any thing equal to the smallest of the works above, been the cause of their removal from the country of those who produced them? Kings, whose fatuity would have befitted them better to drive a herd of swine than to direct the energies of a nation! Well, well! I will lose for a moment the memory of their works in contemplating those of greater men!

If I envy a man any thing it is his smiles; but those of Mr. Fox I neither could envy nor share.

The long gallery of the Louvre should be divided into five or six, and the light admitted into each from above. It would then contain a

third part more of pictures, and every one would be seen to greater advantage. At present it is like looking through a sheet of paper rolled up into a cylinder. The French artists do not derive all the advantages they might from the Italian. They either copy statues, or imitate those who have. Poussin is more studied than Raphael, and although they know well that the perfection of their art consists in the delight which arises from beauty and combinations of forms, and from sweetness and propriety of colours, yet we find no attempt to acquire any thing from Correggio.

To the scandal and infamy of our government, we have no national gallery, when a million or two would have purchased some of the finest specimens of all the ancient masters, both in painting and in statuary, before they were irrevocably fixt in Paris, but after it was known that they would otherwise be sent thither; we have not even a receptacle for the select works of our own most eminent masters. With all these discouragements, we have now living a greater variety of good painters than the French have. Claude Lorraine, N. Poussin, Le Brun, Vernet, and perhaps as many more, have never been equalled here; but those who attribute our failure to our climate talk most ignorantly. It is in landscape, where climate would have most influence, that the greatest number of the English school excel.

Wilson and Gainsborough were succeeded by Loutherbourg and Turner, and the Barkers.[1] Of these, Thomas Barker, however little patronised, and still young, has produced more good pictures than any native of England. Climate alone has little effect on the fine arts. The most vivid and powerful of colourists lived and studied among damps and fogs. The Venetian school was formed in a showery country, and the colours of Rubens were "unborrowed of the sun."[2] The visible face of nature is not that on which painters fix their eyes incessantly; memory, reflection, imagination, give a play and a variety to its features; genius and judgment have the power of contemplating it, abroad or at home, in whatever aspect they wish.

*Page* 215.—"[Two days after our arrival in Paris, we went to see the Palace of Versailles. . . . This cumbrous pile seemed little to suit Mr. Fox's taste. . . . The pride of despotism had erected a mansion for its display of pomp: a galled and oppressed people had paid, with the fruit of their labour, for its erection.] Here their haughty kings rioted—Versailles—and forgetting the miseries of their subjects, added to them by their selfish extravagance, and bestowed on profligate courtiers

[1] "The Woodman," by Thomas Barker, of Bath (1769–1847), was engraved by Bartolozzi. The brother, Benjamin Barker, died in 1838. Thomas Jones Barker, son of Thomas Barker, was born in 1815 and died in 1882.

[2] "With orient hues unborrow'd of the sun."
GRAY, *Progress of Poesy*, iii. 3.

what would have made merit happy, and caused genius to expand and bloom."

Louis XIV., that great patron of literature, is celebrated for giving pensions to men of genius. I once took the trouble to cast up the amount of several, bestowed on the ornaments of his reign, and found that, collectively, they rather fell short of what Cambacérès was said to give as wages to his cook.

*Page* 228.—"[Mr. Fox enjoyed the French *spectacle* greatly, and I think he did not differ much from me, when I preferred it to the English stage. In one respect, however, he felt less pleasure at the public amusements than others did, as] music gave him no great satisfaction. [He did not appear to relish it much, and he himself has assured me, and his mind was free from all disguise, that he derived no pleasure from it. Still this must be taken in a qualified sense, even from himself.] He who could so strongly taste the charms of poetry, could not be destitute of a musical ear."[1]

This does not follow. No people are so ignorant of poetry as musicians. Hardly one was ever

[1] "Mr. Fox had a kind of singular taste for music; in this alone he was totally without judgment. Old tunes were such as alone pleased him. He said that no opera was equal to *Inkle and Yarico*. Some one happening to mention *The Beggar's Opera*, he said, 'Certainly, I will except that. *The Beggar's Opera* is the wittiest drama on the stage: the wit is simple, intelligible, and appeals alike to every one.'"—*Circumstantial Details*, etc., p. 41. Bishop Tomline quotes Windham's remark that Pitt, Fox, Burke, and Dr. Johnson, the four greatest men he had known, had no ear for music. See Lord Rosebery's article in *The Monthly Review*, August, 1903.

found who could write it even indifferently, and extremely few who could value properly even the merits of versification. This appears strange; but it is more so, and equally true, that although dancing requires a good ear, as many think, few dancers are good musicians; their ear is good for nothing more than to note the proper time, the αρσις and θεσις[1] of the feet. The Italians are the most musical people in Europe, and the worst dancers; the French are the best dancers and worst musicians.

*Page* 229.—"No one felt more than Mr. Fox the powers of Homer, Virgil, Pindar, Euripides, Ariosto, or Metastasio."

Alas! these are levelling days indeed! Metastasio in the company of Pindar and of Homer! the powers of Metastasio! of the Abbate Metastasio! Aye verily, why not? was he not *poeta Cesareo*? Mr. Fox did seriously think him a great poet, and knew not that Alfieri was a greater, or one at all! Of Pindar he knew little; he tells us himself that he had read only a part of his works.[2] There is a grandeur of soul in Pindar which never leaves him, even in

[1] *Thesis* is the *ictus* or beat of the foot, *arsis* the uplifting. The meanings are sometimes confused.

[2] "Pindar," Mr. Fox wrote to Trotter, "is too often obscure, and sometimes more spun out and wordy than suits my taste; but there are passages in him quite divine. I have not read above half his works."—*Memoirs*, p. 495.

domestic scenes.[1] His genius does not rest on points or peaks of sublimity, but pervades all things with a vigorous and easy motion, such as poets attribute to the messenger of the gods. He is still more remarkable for his exquisite taste than for his sublimity. He never says more than what is proper, nor otherwise than what is best; and he appears no less the superior of all other mortals in the perfection of wisdom than of poetry.

[*Page* 229.—"Eight or nine days after our arrival, the door of one of the apartments of the Hôtel de Richelieu was thrown open, and a gentleman of small stature, and with nothing prepossessing in his appearance, was shown in. . . . It was Kosciusko!"]

*Page* 231.—"Mr. Fox's reception of him (Kosciusko) was warm and friendly."

He and Palafox are the only two men in the universe I would rise from my chair to look at.[2]

*Page* 232.—"[Kosciusko was in apparent good health, though, I believe, his wounds will never allow him to be perfectly well.] The interview was not very long, but how different was it from the meeting of potentates, prepared to deceive one

[1] A portion of this paragraph is repeated in the Imaginary Conversation between Landor and the Abbé Delille.—*Works*, iv. 97.

[2] "Among all men elevated in station who have made a noise in the world (admirable old expression) I never saw any in whose presence I felt inferiority excepting Kosciusko."—Landor, *Works*, iv. 428.

another, or planning the disturbance of happy and independent nations. Not like Joseph and the remorseless Catharine."[1]

Infamous prostitute and despicable villain! What reaction of the mind drives us back upon you, from the sublimest and purest spectacle of human virtue!

*Page* 233.—["I saw Kosciusko depart with a strong sentiment of profound admiration and sorrow.] He (Kosciusko) was an obscure individual in France, little noticed, and cast back among the class of ordinary men; not regarded by a new government rising upon the ruins of every thing republican, and felt himself alone among the brilliant crowd of opulent and thoughtless strangers."

Yet Mr. Fox was honoured in that country. Were his principles, then, different from Kosciusko's, and more congenial to the French? They were.

Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res.[2]

[*Page* 239.—"I was glad to go to the palace of the Tuileries with Mr. and Mrs. Fox, Mr. West, and Mr. Opie. In front are still to be seen the marks of cannon-ball: the memorable night of the

[1] "Summer, 1780, Joseph made his famous first visit to the Czarina (May-August, 1780)—not yet for some years his thrice-famous second visit, thrice-famous Cleopatra voyage with her down the Danube."—Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*. In 1780 the Emperor Joseph II. met Catharine at Mohileff and went with her to St. Petersburg. The second meeting took place in 1787.

[2] Horace, *Epist.* i. 17. 23.

9th and 10th of August, 1792, was thus vividly recalled to the memory."]

*Page* 240.—"Could one enter this palace without shuddering? and could one avoid acknowledging that after such and greater and continued horrors, the French with some reason have naturally acquiesced under a government which, though falling short of their early and fond expectations, affords them security against [internal commotions, and protects their properties and lives against] the caprice of an ignorant populace?"

No people is so incapable of governing itself as the French, and no government is so proper for it as a despotic and military one. A nation more restless and rapacious than any horde in Tartary, can be controuled only by a Genghis Khan. Such is their animal temper at this day, and such was it in the time of Annibal, as described by Livy. Their emperor has acted towards them with perfect wisdom, and will leave to some future Machiavelli, if Europe should ever see again so consummate a politician, a name which may be added to Agathocles and Cæsar Borgia.[1] He has amused himself with a display of every character from Masaniello[2] up

[1] "Agathocles, the Sicilian, came not merely from a private station, but from the very dregs of the people, to be king of Syracuse."—Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chap. viii. "Cesare Borgia . . . obtained a princedom through the favourable fortunes of his father, and with these lost it."—*Ib.* chap. vii.

[2] Tommaso Anniello, leader of the Neapolitan revolt in July, 1647.

to Charlemagne, but in all his pranks and vagaries he has kept one foot upon Frenchmen. This is a sight which those who think worth seeing might have seen for nothing, had they been wise.

*Page* 240.—"Security against internal commotions and protection of property and lives against the caprice of an ignorant populace, are sometimes given by despotism, and sometimes not. It was, however, no matter of choice with the French: they were dragooned into it, and applauded what they dared not resist. One of the reasons why a new despotism is often strong is this: many brave men are overpowered by more brave men. They are ashamed of acknowledging or showing that they were so, and unite with those whose force they can well estimate. Hence they acquire their share of honours and distinctions; and after they have made others yield, it is forgotten that they themselves have yielded.

## CHAPTER X

### COURT OF BONAPARTE

Fox at the First Consul's levee—Englishmen detained in France—Lord Whitworth—English ambassadors—Lord Douglas at St. Petersburg—Lord Morpeth and the Queen of Prussia—English in Spain—Blake's military operations—France and Switzerland—Fox presented to Bonaparte—Helen Maria Williams—Sir Stephen Fox—General Moreau—*Monuments français*—Madame Cabarrus—Conversation with Bonaparte—Virgil again—Favourite epithets.

[*Page* 242.—"Mr. Fox had now been twelve days in Paris, and we had not seen Bonaparte, except slightly and imperfectly at the theatre. My own wish to behold the first Consul had not been increased since my arrival. The observation of military guards everywhere, the information that the number of barracks in and about Paris were very great, that 20,000 troops were within a short summons; and, above all, a knowledge that the system of *espionage* was carried to an incredible height, making suspicion of the slightest indisposition to government sufficient cause for individuals to be hurried away at night (many of them never to be heard of again), had not contributed, by any means, to exalt my opinion of the new government."]

*Page* 243.—"At this time I even doubted whether an Englishman, a true lover of liberty, ought to sanction the new order of things."

That is to say, at a time, as the author tells us in the very sentence before, when *suspicion* of the *slightest indisposition* to government was sufficient cause for individuals to be hurried away at night, many of them to be *never heard of again.*

But Mr. Fox's determination to go to the levee threw a "*new light*" upon the secretary's mind.

[*Page* 243.—"Mr. Fox's determination to go to the approaching levee threw a new light upon my mind, and I was brought to consider the case dispassionately. Was an English gentleman or nobleman, travelling for instruction or pleasure, to be the reformer and censor of Europe? at Petersburg to reprimand Alexander, or shun his court? at Constantinople to insult the Grand Signior, and rudely reject the society of his ministers? No! I said to myself . . . the enlightened stranger will, in all countries, respect the existing government, conform to its usages and ceremonies, and frequent its court as the focus of all the rank, talent and character of the country."]

Any Englishman who could sanction by his presence such atrocious despotism, is unworthy of breathing the air of his free ancestors, and deserves universal and eternal execration. He should be banished, not only from the society of his countrymen, but from the sight of his fellow-creatures. Never did I feel more cordial pleasure, never did I acknowledge with more gratitude and transport the interposition of divine justice, than when I

heard of such wretches being detained in France, after the people of England had received the grossest insult in the person of their ambassador.[1] Bonaparte, said I, has often been vindictive and sanguinary; let him now be both, let him punish those whom the laws of England, and whom the feelings of Englishmen, can never reach. Wide is the difference between a respect for the usages of a foreign country or a foreign court, and a voluntary homage paid to a ferocious barbarian who holds all usages in contempt. An ambassador goes to him by the order and for the interests of his country; private persons should look at him from a distance, as at a tiger or serpent, such as his native land does not produce. It was requisite, was it, to frequent his court "as the focus of all the rank, talent and character of the country"? An involuntary smile will rise at these expressions, of which the folly and impudence are become a byword in every lane and alley, and are the signal for boys to hoot at whenever they meet a Foxite. The rank and character, and best manners, were not excluded from the Tuileries, but disdained to enter. Many men of illustrious rank and unostentatious honour were seen daily in the

[1] The famous interview between Bonaparte and Lord Whitworth took place on March 13, 1803. The First Consul raised his arm as if he meant to strike the ambassador, who afterwards declared that, had the blow fallen, he would have run Bonaparte through the body with his sword. Lord Whitworth was the uncle of the Hon. Rose Whitworth Aylmer, the subject of Landor's elegy.

gardens of the Luxembourg, whose countenance said, *I would be grateful, but gratitude is a crime under the new government; the hand of Bonaparte, when Mr. Fox ceases to kiss it, may consign us to the dungeon which is to be the boundary of our existence.*

*Page* 244.—"[Mr. Merry,[1] the British ambassador, was a good-natured and friendly man, but unequal to trying and delicate emergencies. . . .] I had subsequent reason, in Mr. Fox's ministry, to observe that Mr. Pitt's long ministry had been ill supplied with men of talent in foreign courts!"

There is no nation in Europe, great or secondary, which employs such improper persons in embassies. Mr. Fox sent a nobleman[2] into Russia who is said to have treated almost every one, native and foreign, with contempt. Ignorant, indolent, and dissipated, the merchants presented to him, in very glowing language, a long account of their grievances. They expected he would consider it, look over treaties and stipulations, and present it in diplomatic terms to the emperor. Whether he read it or not is uncertain, and it is difficult to say on which supposition we could found his best

[1] Mr. Anthony Merry was the Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris at the time of Fox's visit.

[2] The Marquis of Douglas, afterwards Duke of Hamilton. See *Diaries*, etc., of Sir George Jackson, March 29, 1807: "The Emperor, it seems, had taken great offence at Lord Douglas having delivered to the Russian Minister, as an official note from himself, the translation of a memorial he had received from the merchants at St. Petersburg, which contained expressions not very flattering to the Russians" (ii. 90).

defence, but he immediately delivered it, or sent it to the people in power there. The emperor was enraged at such language; and a body of men whom he had always protected, and whose grievances, when he knew them, he would redress, lost his favour and countenance for ever.

If one ambassador had the negligence or temerity to deliver an instrument into the hands of an emperor, rough and red-hot, another[1] was more conciliating and more circumspect. When the most lovely queen in the universe was overturned in her carriage, on a road where the enemy was pursuing her, while the cannon was heard louder and louder at every discharge, he wished to know whether he could lend her any assistance, and—rode on. He never saw the members of government, never asked one question of those who came forward to give him information, listened to nothing, accepted no hospitality, rejected all services, dismissed with impatience and rudeness those who offered any, and brought back no other intelligence than that Napoleon had gained a sort of victory, that the roads were very sandy and

[1] Viscount Morpeth, afterwards sixth Earl of Carlisle (died 1848), was sent on a mission to Prussia in October, 1806. Sir George Jackson wrote that, after the battle of Jena (October 14), "Morpeth and his party had to run for it." "Lord Morpeth," Lady Errol wrote, "is a fine person to scud, like a child, frighten'd and run away, and burnt his papers, and yet can't tell anything but what he heard from a few mad, cowardly runaways like himself." See Miss Festing's *Frere and his Friends*, p. 138.

heavy, that persons of condition could not ride along them expeditiously or comfortably; and, by way of after-thought and reminiscence, that he passed the Queen of Prussia, thrown out of her carriage, dead or alive he could not say positively, and that the duke of Brunswick too had met with an accident. It is proper to choose ambassadors from men of good breeding. If they are too inquisitive they may hear unpleasant things, and the money they disburse for secret services may be distributed among people of no rank and character. I know not whether it was an ambassador or a general who weighed a whisker against a religion, and a turban against an empire; but he certainly showed a most laudable zeal for the uniformity and efficacy of the service.

What information and intuition were requisite for an ambassador in Spain or Sicily! Yet we still continue to pursue our former follies; and a knowledge of the people, and even of the language, is considered as a matter of indifference—well enough, but a superfluity. Agents of every rank and description were sent into Spain. Young men were highly flattered by a cordial reception from the members of government, who in their turn were flattered just as highly by receiving any thing in the form of a minister from a foreign court. The *res dura et regni novitas*,[1] were never

[1] Virgil, *Æneid*, i. 563.

once considered on either side. It was pleasanter to experience marks of attention and respect from persons of rank and power, than to collect the most useful pieces of information, which lay more widely scattered, and were to be given by coarser hands. I found a disposition in the higher orders to rely too much on the English. Magazines were stored up at Coruña, and other places, of arms, ammunition, clothing, while the army of Blake was incapable of moving from Aguilar, after the battle of Medina del Rio Seco,[1] for want of these very necessaries. Our communications should have been direct with the armies on the coast, between our naval officers and their military. Every movement should have been concerted and combined. Great part of our fleet, lying idle before Brest, should occasionally have acted as far as Bilbao. Bayonne, San Sebastian, Passage, should have been blockaded; Santona,[2] which was totally unfortified, without a gun,

[1] The Spaniards, under Cuesta and Blake, were defeated by Marshal Blessières at Medina del Rio Seco on July 14, 1808. This opened the way to Madrid, where Joseph Bonaparte arrived on July 20. Southey says: "Blake was thought to have given proofs of great military talents both in the action and in the retreat."—*Peninsular War*, i. 395. A month or two later Landor, with a troop of volunteer cavalry raised by himself, attached himself to the Galician army. He was engaged in some petty skirmishes near Aguilar, and was given the honorary rank of colonel.

[2] On July 5, 1810, Captain F. W. Aylmer, afterwards sixth Baron Aylmer, of his Majesty's ship *Narcissus*, landed at Santona with a force of British sailors and marines and some Spanish troops, and destroyed the French batteries. Captain Aylmer was a brother of the Hon. Rose Aylmer, and years afterwards made Landor's acquaintance at Bath.

without a soldier, should have been occupied. The French will make it a fortress more important than Gibraltar; for it possesses all the same advantages, with a haven very extensive and perfectly secure, and the hills along the coast, even the spot that must be fortified, are covered with oaks of large growth nearly to the summit. The town cannot be bombarded, nor the supplies of food or water cut off. By these operations, which were neglected because they were easy, and because bad statesmen never attempt any thing but what they cannot do, the armies then pouring into Spain would have been detained or checked, and our alliance would have produced the best effects of co-operation.

If these things appeared at first too easy, they were soon after considered in quite another point of view. Petty fishing towns were objects unworthy of those commanding geniuses who preside over the destiny of nations; but a great military road is connected with these petty fishing towns; some hundred thousands of cannon-balls were accumulated in Passage and San Sebastian; several pieces of heavy artillery were deposited there, and forty or fifty ships filled with biscuit and flour; these were defended by two hundred and fifty conscripts. To attack so many ships, so many vast heaps of cannon-balls, and so many pieces of heavy artillery, as were actually lying on the

ground, and wanted nothing but carriages and artillerymen, is not one of those daring actions for which an English minister would choose to be responsible. In the panorama which he exhibits to the *Honourable House*, the petty fishing town is turned suddenly into an impregnable fortress. English politicians thought such things impracticable, chimerical, contemptible; Spanish generals thought otherwise; but an enemy with a superiority of resources lay between. They were soon persuaded, by those who could have no interest in flattering and deceiving them, to trust solely in their own valour and firmness; that the assistance of the English would ever be ineffectual, though it might, in the beginning, be sincere. Nothing was more useful and important than to inculcate this truth in the right place; it was inculcated, and will bring forth its fruits in due season.

[*Page* 254.—"Shortly after our arrival in Paris, distressing accounts (distressing to lovers of liberty) were daily brought from Switzerland.] That country (Switzerland) was now suffering the horrors of military oppression."

Yet Mr. Fox was paying court to that co-apostate who occasioned and commanded these *horrors*.

[*Page* 256.—"The aristocratical governments (of Switzerland) had long disgusted and alienated the people; and the country, not feeling the same

stimulus which warmed them against Austria in 1300, fell an easy prey to French ambition. Accordingly,] the senate of Berne in 1802 sanctioned all the measures of Bonaparte, joined with his government against the people," etc.[1]

Enemies of reform, in all countries, will do the same thing. They always have done it, and they always will. Those who at this moment would hear such a sentiment with abhorrence, and who really think themselves incapable of such an action, would certainly commit it. They would attribute the fault to the people, to its violence, to its contempt of their wisdom, and to that universal disorder which never listens to any; but, believe me, they would commit it.

[*Pages* 258, 259.—"On the day of the great levee . . . Lord Holland, Lord Robert Spencer, Lord St. John, Mr. Adair, and myself accompanied Mr. Fox. . . . Mr. Merry, the English ambassador, appeared on the part of the British government, to sanction and recognize the rank and government of the first Consul!"[2]]

*Page* 260.—"[What a subject he (Mr. Merry) had for a letter, in the style of Barillon, for the perusal of Mr. Pitt, or his friend, Mr. Addington,

[1] "And at length," Trotter proceeds, "conspired with France in stifling the last struggling sigh for liberty."

[2] "On November 15 (1802), Gillray published a caricature entitled, 'Introduction of Citizen Volpone and his Suite at Paris,' in which Fox and his wife, Lord and Lady Holland, and Grey, are stooping low to the new ruler of France."—WRIGHT, *Caricature History of the Georges*, p. 588.

then acting as Pitt's deputy, or *locum tenens* in the government! Mr. Merry, then acting under Lord Hawkesbury, the Quixotic marcher to Paris, which same lord was now receiving a magnificent present of a service of china of unrivalled beauty and excellence, from this same new government and Bonaparte.] It would have been an instructive lesson to Mr. Pitt himself, could he invisibly, with Minerva by his side, have contemplated the scene."

He! with Minerva by his side! The goddess would have appeared:

> Ardentes oculos intorquens lumine glauco,
> Et graviter frendens.[1]

But, as for giving him an *instructive* lesson! the goddess of wisdom had not the attribute of Omnipotence.

[*Page* 287.—"At this time an invitation was sent to Mr. Fox, from Miss Helen Maria Williams.[2] She requested the pleasure of his company to an evening party, and, to express how much this honour would gratify her, wrote that it would be 'a white day' thus distinguished. Some of Mr. Fox's friends wished him to decline this invitation altogether, from apprehension of giving a handle to ill-nature and calumny. He, however, always

[1] Virgil, *Georgics*, iv. 451. Wrongly quoted.

[2] Author of *Letters containing a Sketch of the Politics of France* (1795) and other works. She lived many years in France, and was described by Samuel Rogers as a very fascinating person, but not handsome. "I have frequently dined with her," Rogers said, "at Paris, when Kosciusko and other celebrated persons were of the party."

the same, disdaining the *fear of suspicion*, and unwilling ungraciously to refuse an invitation earnestly pressed, did not agree with them, and went for a short time."]

*Page* 288.—"He was aware that he might be misrepresented for going to Miss Williams's conversazione, but he was too benignant to slight *with contempt and scorn* the request of an accomplished female, whose vanity, as well as a natural admiration of so great a man, were deeply concerned that he should grant it."

Can any thing be so absurd and ridiculous as to talk in this manner of Mr. Fox? In what respect was he the superior of Miss Williams? His family was base and despicable. Stephen Fox,[1] in the memory of persons but lately deceased, was a gentleman's valet, and was brought into the house of commons for administering a medicine which never enters the lips, and for saying, *God bless you, Sir*, on receiving it back in his face. His master said rightly, "*Stephen, you ought to be at court, or in the house.*"

[1] Sir Stephen Fox, the grandfather of Charles James Fox. "This gentleman," Evelyn wrote in his *Diary* (September 6, 1680), "came first a poor boy from the quire of Salisbury, then was taken notice of by Bishop Duppa, and afterwards waited on my Lord Percy, brother to Algernon, Earl of Northumberland, who procur'd for him an inferior place amongst the clerks of the Kitchen and Greene Cloth side, where he was found so humble, diligent, industrious, and prudent in his behaviour, that his Majesty, being in exile, and Mr. Fox waiting, both the King and Lords about him frequently employ'd him about their affairs." Landor's story will not be found either in Sir George Trevelyan's *Early History of Charles James Fox* or in *The Memoirs of the Life of Sir S. Fox, Kt.* (1717, reprinted 1811).

The political views of Miss Williams have been clear and undeviating, so as not to admit Mr. Fox's to a comparison; her imagination is more vivid, her reading more extensive, her writings more animated and more correct than his. I never saw her, and have little esteem for her, but I will do her justice.

[*Page* 290.—"We continued busily employed every morning in transcribing and reading at the office of the Archives; and as we were never interrupted or disturbed, I was surprised one day by the door opening. A stranger of an interesting and graceful figure came gently in, advanced rapidly, and in embracing Mr. Fox, showed a countenance full of joy, while tears rolled down his cheeks. Mr. Fox testified equal emotion. It was M. de la Fayette, the virtuous and unshaken friend of liberty! . . . Fayette, at a very early age, had visited London; he had there become acquainted with Mr. Fox, and they had not met again till now."

*Page* 291.—"M. Fayette, born under a despotic regime, saw nothing in his own country to employ a young and enthusiastic mind. North America attracted his attention. . . . She was in the infancy of her strength, when Fayette, animated with the glorious cause, left all the luxuries and indulgences which rank and fortune could procure him, crossed the Atlantic, and offered himself to the Americans, as a champion and a friend. He built, at his own expense, a frigate, to aid the cause; and, by his military and civil exertions, contributed not a

little to the emancipation of the United States of America!"]

*Page* 292.—"Whilst Fayette thus promoted the cause of liberty in America, his noble friend in the British house of commons laboured with equal zeal to inspire an obstinate and unenlightened ministry," etc.[1]

And immediately after formed a coalition with it and entered into all its views! Yes, with men who separated from England all that retained the principles of a Sydney and a Hampden.

[*Page* 297.—"As Mr. Fox proceeded in his researches among the Archives, an occasional day intervened, as he advanced in his progress, which was given to invitations, or visits of an interesting nature. A *déjeûner*, given by Madame Récamier, at Clichy, at this time, collected almost every distinguished person at Paris: we went there. . . . So much has been said of the beauty of the charming hostess, that it would be superfluous to say more, than that every one was captivated by it. But her simple and unaffected manners, a genuine mildness and goodness of disposition, obvious in all she said and did, with as little vanity as is possible to conceive, in a young woman so extravagantly admired, were still more interesting. She received her visitors with singular ease and frankness. The house at Clichy was a pretty one,

[1] "With respect," Trotter proceeds, "for the rights of humanity, and mercy for the tortured Americans: loudly and repeatedly he raised his voice in their favour, and if he did not convince the ministry, he at length convinced the nation."

and the gardens extended to the river; in the latter (*sic*), the company walked about till all were assembled."]

*Page* 298.—"[There] for the first time we saw General Moreau. The general is negligent in his dress."

And in every thing he says or does. He was always fond of saying a petulant thing about the chief Consul, and was pleased with those who could say it better: a certain proof, if not of his enmity, at least of his ill-will and disaffection. It can hardly be said that it was rancour, for there was not strength enough in him to turn sour, but there was a peevish disappointment, a perverse and languid vexation. He is respected and esteemed in his family and among his officers, but his wisdom was more conspicuous before he was crossed by fortune. It was of a nature to profit by that of others; which is perhaps, in political and military affairs, the best wisdom of all. In this temper he followed, and was guided by, the genius of Pichegru, a silent and stern man, who pointed out from a distance the way to victory.

*Page* 305.—"The *monuments français*,[1] disposed in a manner the happiest that can be conceived."

[1] "The Musée des Monuments Nationaux," Miss Berry wrote in her journal, in March, 1802, "occupies the whole emplacement of the Convent des Petits Augustins. Here they have brought together all

Monuments lose their interest when they have been removed from the places where they were first erected. That of Héloise and Abelard, in the center of a quadrangle, with some dozen others, and a little stick of weeping willow bent over it, did more than lose all its effect. Paris is not the Paraclete.

*Page* 313.—"[Previous to our leaving Paris for La Grange,[1]] Madame Cabarrus, *ci-devant* Tallien, gave an elegant and sumptuous dinner to Mr. Fox."

Here are no such remarks as were made about Miss Williams; nothing is said of Mr. Fox's great condescension, no admiration is raised about his dignity and sweetness. Miss Williams was distinguished for many and great attainments, Madame Cabarrus for none. O'Connor was of the party.

*Page* 313.—"[Every thing which taste, genius, or art could contrive, conspired to make this the most perfect sort of entertainment I had witnessed. Madame Cabarrus was a most lovely woman, something upon a large scale, and of the most fascinating manners. She was rather in disgrace at court, where decorum and morals were beginning to be

the figures of the kings, from St. Denis and every other place; all the tombs and monuments of their great men and women; in short, all the spoil of the churches and convents from almost every part of the country."—*Journals*, ii. 152.

[1] The residence of the Marquis de Lafayette, to whom Mr. Fox was about to pay a visit.

severely attended to; Madame was supposed, when separated from her husband, to have been indiscreet, and did not appear there.

"Most of Mr. Fox's friends were at this dinner; but the surprise, and, indeed, displeasure of some English characters of political consequence, was great at finding that Mr. Arthur O'Connor was one of the guests. This had been done inadvertently by Madame Cabarrus, and was certainly not considered.] Mr. (now Lord) Erskine was extremely uneasy lest evil report should misrepresent this matter in England."[1]

Consciousness of integrity is enough for honest men; the shades of opinion fly over them, and leave no mortifying chill on their bosoms. I am sorry to hear this of Lord Erskine, whose mind has also been much agitated by the Revelations—poor man!

[*Pages* 315—316.—"On the 1st Vendemiare (September 23d) another levee was held, at which Mr. Fox was present. . . . It was usual to invite those present at a former one to dinner on the subsequent one. Mr. Fox on this occasion, therefore, dined with the first Consul. I recollect well his return in the evening to the Hôtel de Richelieu; he said Bonaparte talked a great deal, and I inferred at the time, that he who engrossed

[1] "Mr. Fox," Trotter adds, "ever magnanimous, treated it as an unavoidable, though unlucky circumstance. He spoke to Mr. O'Connor as usual, and lost none of the enjoyment of the evening from an event, which being trivial, must be forgotten when malignity was fatigued with recounting it."—*Memoirs*, p. 314.

the conversation with Mr. Fox, debarred himself of much instruction, and did not feel his value sufficiently. Mr. Fox, however, was pleased, or I may say amused. After dinner, which was a short one, the first Consul retired, with a select number, to Madame Bonaparte's apartments in the Tuileries, where the rest of the evening was spent. Mr. Fox appeared to consider Bonaparte as a young man who was a good deal intoxicated with his success and surprizing elevation, and did not doubt of his sincerity as to the maintenance of peace."]

*Page* 317.—"[Bonaparte spoke a good deal about the possibility of doing away all difference between the inhabitants of the two worlds—of blending the black and the white, and having universal peace !] Mr. Fox [related a considerable part of the evening's conversation, with which he was certainly much diverted, but he] had imbibed no improved impressions of the first Consul's genius from what passed."

It is pleasing and flattering to self-love to discover something extraordinary in such characters. When we first look at them, when we first hear them speak, they strike; but the second sentence generally destroys the effect of the first, the second interview invariably. The first Consul talked of blending the Black and the White. It is an operation in which I should have no objection to hear that he was personally employed; but, carrying it on with the vigour and to the extent

of his other operations, he would leave us as little of physical beauty in the world as he has left of moral. In another century or two, men would flock to the Tuileries to see the frightful faces of Antinous, Meleager, Apollo, and Venus, with their strait legs, sharp noses, and wavy hair.

*Page* 342.—"[The last day of my stay in Paris being one on which a levee was held, I went with Mr. Fox and some of his friends. . . .] Bonaparte's former question [of] Etes-vous catholique? [to me, when informed that I was an Irish gentleman] was not repeated."

There was no dignity or politeness, or good sense, or propriety in this question. Louis XIV. would never have asked it; for, although a bigot, he was a gentleman.

[*Page* 348.—" The government was too recently established, when I was in France, to decide what effect it had upon the people."]

*Page* 349.—"[The taxes were very high, but they were equally imposed in 1802—] there were no reversions or sinecures."

Nor are there yet; no wonder we do not consider it as quite a regular government. Ours is the one to teach philosophy. Our passions have been well exercised, and are grown perfectly cool, and we do not go to our lesson in a state of repletion. We have learned, or ought to have

learned, patience; we have been taught several very good new prayers, and are put into a frame of mind to be very sincerely penitent. But I am sorry to find that there are still some restless spirits in the lower forms, who say that if it must continue so with us to the end of the chapter they care not how much margin there is.

*Page* 349.—"[There was evidently now not only a commencement of a new government, but of a new æra of things: the radical change had been so great, that it might be said, as of a new order of things rising up—

> Jura magistratusque legunt, sanctumque senatum.
> Hic portus alii effodiunt:] hic *alta* theatris
> Fundamenta locant alii, immanesque columnas
> Rupibus excidunt, scenis decora *alta* futuris."[1]

The author is very fond of long extracts from Virgil, which I read willingly through wherever I find them, and as Mr. Fox did not make any remark on this passage, I will hazard one.

The words in italics point my aim. There is no epithet of which Virgil is so fond; it is the only one he has used redundantly.[2] I do not, however, think that he would have admitted it in this situation; it holds a similar one just above; the word was probably *apta*. Decorations adapted to,

[1] Virgil, *Æneid*, i. 426.

[2] Compare Landor's *Works*, v. 87: "In reading the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, I remarked, that among the epithets, the poet is fondest of *grande*: I had remarked that Virgil is fondest of *altus*."

and worthy of, the magnificent scenes to be represented on that public theatre.

I could, perhaps, if I looked into my little edition, find some other places marked, where alterations might be suggested. We are not to fancy that absolute perfection is to be found in the writers of antiquity. In general they are greatly more correct than ours, but they also, and even the greatest of them, have their blemishes. The lines I am about to transcribe are exquisite:

> Quin etiam hyberno moliris sidere classem,
> Et mediis properas Aquilonibus ire per altum;
> Crudelis! quid si non arva aliena, domosque
> Ignotas peteres, et Troja antiqua maneret,
> Troja per undosum peteretur classibus æquor?[1]

If *hybernum* were substituted for *undosum*, how incomparably more beautiful would the sentence be for this energetic repetition! Adjectives in *osus* express abundance and intensity to such a degree that some learned men are of opinion they take it from *odi*, the most potent and universal of feelings. If so, famosus, jocosus, fabulosus, nemorosus, must have been a later brood, which has increased prodigiously in modern Italy, and nearly to the same amount in England, France, and Spain. *Undosum*, however, with all its force, would be far from an equivalent for hybernum,

[1] Virgil, *Æneid*, iv. 309. Much of the next and following paragraphs was repeated by Landor in *Works*, iv. 123, 124.

even if hybernum derived no fresh importance from its apposition.

The passion of Dido is always true to nature. Other women have called their lovers cruel; she calls Æneas so, not for betraying and deserting her, but for departing and hazarding his life, dear to her, at the instant he was depriving her of hers, by encountering the tempests of a wintery sea.

"Even if it were not to foreign lands and unknown habitations that you were hastening; even if Troy were in existence, and you were destined thither, would you choose a season like this? Would you navigate a sea of which you are ignorant, under the stars of winter?"

# CHAPTER XI

## MINISTRY OF ALL THE TALENTS

Death of William Pitt—The Coalition of 1806—The King's dislike of Fox—Lady Moira's forecast—Grenvilleites—Monarch and Empire—Hateful phrases—The Irish Roman Catholics—Lord Grey and George III.—Irish politicians—A corrupt and venal Parliament—Eulogy of Sir John Newport—Fox and Grattan.

[*Pages* 357–9.—" In the commencement of the year 1806, after the demise of Mr. Pitt, there existed a pretty strong sentiment in the nation, but a great deal more powerful one among certain parties, that a combination of rank, talent, and popularity, was imperiously required to support the State. . . .

" I am much inclined to think that Mr. Fox had determined to devote himself to history, previous to Mr. Pitt's death; nor do I think that event would have altered his intentions, unless the voice of the people, reaching the throne, had concurred in seeing placed at the head of the ministry a friend to the just equilibrium between regal authority and popular rights, a man of commanding genius and extensive knowledge. Assailed, however, by persuasion, and willing to sacrifice his own opinions for the good of his country, his judgment and feelings gave way, and he consented to take a part in the ministry, in conjunction with Lord Grenville.

" He could not be ignorant that such a ministry

was unstable. The basis was without foundation. Even the superstructure was Pittite, to which Mr. Fox lent the sanction and grace of his illustrious name. It is not improbable that the court, unobstructed by Lord Grenville and his friends, might have determined on placing Mr. Fox at the helm of affairs. Certain it is, that his admission to the sole management of the government, or his rejection, would have benefited the cause of the people."]

*Page* 358.—"The *voice* of the people reaching the throne, had *concurred* in *seeing*," etc. My business is not with expressions, but with facts. The people cared nothing about the matter. They expected nothing better, and feared nothing worse. No event ever caused less interest than the new coalition.

*Page* 358.—"Assailed, however, by persuasion, and willing to *sacrifice his own opinions* for the good of his country, his *judgment and feeling gave way*, and he consented to take a part in the ministry in conjunction with Lord Grenville."[1]

It would be impossible to state a stronger fact in any language, to prove how utterly unfit was such a *sacrificing* mind for the management of this country at such a crisis.

It is precisely of that order which never can

[1] William Pitt died January 23, 1806. The Ministry of all the Talents, with Lord Grenville as First Lord of the Treasury, and Mr. Fox as Foreign Secretary, took office in February.

govern well or be well governed; for if its judgment and feeling give way, so slippery and elastic is it, that nothing can rest on it uprightly and stably. What must those feelings be, which *the good of the country* requires should be sacrificed? What must be that judgment which contrary judgments can warp?

*Page* 358.—"Even the superstructure was Pittite, to which Mr. Fox lent *the sanction and grace of his illustrious name.*" More shame for him, then. What he had opposed in doing ten years together, he sanctioned and signed when done! Honest men of all parties! is this right, is it wise? Is it not weak, wicked, infamous; does it not undermine all trust and confidence; does it not indispose us from aiding in any good, lest, after all our zeal and labour, the object should be abandoned? Speak plainly; come forward without turn or subterfuge; lay your hands on your hearts, if they are English, and answer this one question.

*Page* 359.—"It is not improbable that the *court*, unobstructed by Lord Grenville and his friends, might have determined on placing Mr. Fox at the helm of affairs."

The court? Who? What advisers of the King? George III. never liked him, and those about the royal person would not propose the minister who might displace them. They never thought him

more likely to be serviceable than his opponents, and would not have recommended him if they had.

*Page* 360.—"[Early in February, 1806, the new ministry, with Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville at their head, were called to his Majesty's councils; and as he wished to place me near himself, he required me to join him the day after he had received his Majesty's commands. I left Ireland with no sanguine hopes that a ministry thus constituted could render much service to these countries, and particularly to Ireland.] Lady Moira,[1] whose name and character is deserving of equal admiration and respect, distinctly pointed out to me the impossibility of the ministry existing long."

This woman had more wisdom than all the politicians and ministers of both parties. No person in either kingdom was more distinguished for sound sense, and, what will always arise from it, right principles. If Mr. Fox foresaw what she did, with the same clearness, he must either have been very foolish or very base to undertake any part in the business.

[1] Lady Moira, mother of the future Governor-General of India (afterwards Marquis of Hastings). Before her marriage she was Lady Elizabeth Hastings, of whom Steele said that "to behold her is an immediate check to loose behaviour, and to love her is a liberal education."—*Tatler*, No. 44. "I saw Lady Moira," Trotter writes, "after Mr. Fox's death; she received me with great kindness, but great emotion,—she took me by the hand, as I addressed her. 'We have lost everything,' said she, the tears rolling in torrents down her venerable cheeks; 'that great man was a guide for them all; he was their great support, and now there is nothing cheering in the prospect. For me, I have nearly run my course,—I shall remain but a little longer, but others will suffer; the loss of Fox is irreparable.'"—*Memoirs*, p. 364.

I am happy to read on. Here is a just and eloquent narrative of facts, relative to this illustrious woman. The generosity of her heart, her remoteness from Fox, and her proximity to the despicably poor creatures who managed the affairs of Ireland, made her think more highly of him than her experience had warranted.

*Page* 368.—"[In Fox his Majesty at length saw the great shield of the country, and by calling him into the cabinet, on the demise of Mr. Pitt, gave a proof that he had been held in thraldom by the overbearing minister, who it may be truly said, could bear no rival near the throne. There was much greatness of mind in the venerable monarch who thus rose above the long system of delusion practised against him, and he proved himself thereby both the lover of his people, and also the ultimate approver of Mr. Fox's political career. With such an adviser, he now perceived America would have been unalienated, Great Britain unburthened, and France of just dimensions and moderate power. Afflicted as the father of his people now unhappily is, bowed down with years and infirmity, it is a consolation to his family, and satisfaction to those who sincerely venerate him, that, with his faculties unclouded, and his health unimpaired,] he chose Charles James Fox as his minister, *instead* of continuing the system of Mr. Pitt."

I should have said, Mr. Fox was appointed minister, and the system of Mr. Pitt continued; and I should have been supported by what follows.

[*Page* 369.—"Had Lord Grenville and his friends been thrown aside, much more would have been effected, but] party was too strong for the monarch."[1]

I hate that word. British monarch and British empire are fine-sounding words, but I delight *sermone pedestri.* I like *king* and *kingdom* much better, and have no objection to the phrase of Queen Elizabeth, *commonwealth*, when it does not remind me of speculating agitators and shuffling demagogues. Whoever is desirous to see more on this subject may consult Lord Molesworth's preface to the *Franco-Gallia.*[2]

*Page* 376.—"[Mr. Fox's loss was peculiarly felt in the cabinet, on the affair of] the Catholic bill[3] *forced* on the King by Lord Grey, then Lord Howick [and Lord Grenville]."

When I consider that the King is the true representative of the English people, that all

[1] "And the genius of Fox," Trotter gloomily adds, "was thus cramped, thwarted, and counteracted."

[2] *Franco-Gallia:* or an account of the ancient free State of France and most other parts of Europe before the loss of their liberties. "Written originally in Latin by the famous civilian Francis Hotoman, in the year 1574, and translated into English by the author of *The Account of Denmark*" (London, 1711). The translator was Robert, first Viscount Molesworth (1656–1725). A second edition, with a new preface by the translator, appeared in 1721. In this Lord Molesworth said: "Queen Elizabeth, and many other of our best Princes, were not scrupulous of calling our Government a *Commonwealth*, even in their solemn speeches to Parliament."

[3] The introduction of the Roman Catholic Army and Navy Service Bill led, in March, 1807, to the dismissal of the Ministry.

other representation has been, at various times, a fallacy and phantom, and the real presence has been vested and concentered in his august person, I am shocked at the idea of any thing *forced* on him, and the more so by a person who received at his hands the most permanent and distinguishing marks of royal favour. I will not trust myself with the belief of such an outrage on the sovereign, such a scandalous and infamous breach of gratitude and loyalty. It would have been high treason; and although the ministers might not have impeached him, as they wanted only his place, yet the people, who pity the infirmities of their king, and remember all his good-humour and affability, would have been clamorous for the punishment of so atrocious a culprit. It would be impossible for any king, after this, to admit such a person to his councils, even if he had useful talents and graceful manners. The secretary of Mr. Fox had perhaps more justice on his side, when he represented this assistant as the one with whose forwardness, precipitancy, and folly, the minister had most reason to be offended. It would be difficult for him, in these circumstances, to observe that temperance in phrase which the delinquent had not observed in practice. Suppose two writers, the one of present, the other of past events; suppose them to possess the same intelligence, and to employ the same style, on the

misconduct of any minister, or the bad tendency of any transaction; still that perhaps would be considered as arrogant or malicious in the contemporary, which would be received as deliberate and strict justice from the subsequent historian.

Thus a writer not more powerful than a Roscoe, with sentences puffed out and highly coloured, like a poor child's cheek in cold weather, would be listened to as a narrator of old occurrences more attentively, for instance, than a St. Simon, with all his simplicity and force, if he had published his memoirs in his life. This is a reason why, in speaking of those around us, we should avoid the appearance of exaggeration. Vigorous minds will, without effort, throw the obtrusive and presumptuous into the dust, but it is an unnecessary effort to kick them up again; such people as Lord Grey should be permitted to go on, whether they chuse to be crawling or rampant, into their obscurity; it is an idle and unworthy action to intercept the peering glimpses of their ephemeral glory. When they commit vile actions, speak them out: that is a duty; but nothing is gained by expatiating on generalities, or by representing them as more impudent and outrageous than they are.

*Pages* 383–5.—"[Impressed with a lively sense of the value of Ireland, I stated to Mr. Fox the necessity of immediate and effectual steps to relieve

her. . . . I do not think that Mr. Fox's mind was at all at ease upon the subject of Ireland. . . . He did not affect to say that much could be done, . . . and when I afterwards renewed the subject, I found in him the same feelings.] It was evident that Mr. Grattan and Mr. Ponsonby, and their friends, had made no conditions for her (Ireland). I ever considered this as a fatal dereliction of her interests."

The secretary and friend of Mr. Fox is always sincere and open, and he hesitates not to expose the baseness of his Whig countrymen. Irishmen in general, if any facts are adduced against their corrupt and venal parliament, now happily extinct, or against those remnants of it which Pitt's explosion has blown across the channel, speak of the utter ignorance or deplorable misinformation of the English. One would imagine they were natives of Japan, in such secrecy do they believe all the events of their country to be involved. But their country is more interesting to us than they themselves are aware. We read more of their best informed writers than they do, more attentively and more dispassionately. They fancy the contrary, because we read other things too, and it is a consolation to fatuity that general reading must be necessarily superficial. No mistake is greater. In the regions of literature lights are thrown from a prodigious distance, and spring reciprocally from all directions. A little reflection

will teach the lower order of gentlemen that points of law, politics, and taste, can be discussed in a better way than by duel; an ordeal which we will reserve, if they please, as an infallible proof only in affairs of honour and chastity. There is no occasion to extend its jurisdiction any further.

After lamenting the frail patriotism of his countrymen, in which the supersaturation of colouring should have excited a suspicion of rottenness, the secretary's mind might have reposed with decent pride on the virtues of one illustrious character. There is a man in whose whole political life, and, I have heard also, in whose private, no opponent has been able, however invidious and acute, to detect an unwise, or dishonourable, or disingenuous action. Would to God I could leave any doubt or uncertainty of the person to whom I allude, and that the description were as applicable to any other as to Sir John Newport.[1]

This is the man who is destined, if any is, to appease the discontents of Ireland; and to soften the fanaticism of a church, which, in the paroxysm of its intemperance, has assailed the peaceable

[1] Sir John Newport, Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer in the Ministry of all the Talents—a staunch Whig, a genuine Irishman, and a steady supporter of Catholic emancipation. He died February 18, 1843. "Few men have rendered more service to Ireland. . . . In adverse times he was an enlightened reformer, a true, a zealous, and a judicious friend of the country."—*Examiner*, March 1, 1840.

tenets of another, and staggered in every direction from its own.

*Page* 386.—"[I am sure, too, that, had Mr. Grattan and his friends expressly declared that they must know what terms of relief would be granted to Ireland, before they could support the new ministry, Mr. Fox would have found himself strengthened by the demand, and that if no other man in the cabinet had listened to their proposals, he would. The Catholics, helpless as they were, having none of their body in the English parliament, acted a wise as well as generous part in relying silently upon Mr. Fox; but Mr. Grattan, having become an English member for Ireland, ought to have insisted upon positive measures of redress for her. . . . I am certain Mr. Fox would not have been displeased at this conduct.] He was not a man to shudder at a division in the cabinet."

He might have cast the rind very easily, when an air of popularity was beginning to play about him. By a simple and straitforward movement, preserving all his own calmness and politeness towards the King, he might have deprecated the Catholic cause, but strengthened it so enormously as to terrify the court into concessions. His coyness would make the Catholics the more pressing, particularly as they knew his inclinations towards them; it would at the same time be a sign, however fallacious, of deference to the King's opinion and scruples, of firmness in resisting

the importunity of his own wishes, and of judgment in foreseeing the moment when it would be most expedient to accede. If a minister is to gratify two parties, he cannot do it without a little duplicity. The only error of Mr. Fox was, that he thought duplicity quite enough; but on the other side of the statesman must be dexterity. The admission of one or two more principles of right would have done the business. He ought not to have permitted any thing great and important to be done without him or after him.

## CHAPTER XII

### LAST DAYS AND DEATH OF FOX

Gatherings at St. Anne's Hill—Fox venerated Chaucer—Spenser's *Faery Queene*—Dryden's majestic verse—Burns, Chatterton, Cowper—Fox attacked by Canning—An extraordinary boy—Canning's duel with Castlereagh—Lord Holland and Sir R. Adair—Molière and Klopstock—How it strikes the contemporary—"Public characters"—A modest biography—The Oxford tutor—Fox's illness—Retirement to Chiswick—The Prince Regent—Last days of C. J. Fox—Capture of Buenos Ayres.

[*Pages* 389–95.—"In the spring of the year 1806, Mr. Fox was always happy to get to St. Anne's Hill for a few days, and withdraw from the harassing occupations of a ministry, which it required all his vigour, and all the weight of his name to uphold. . . . He seemed more than ever to delight in the country. A small party, consisting of General Fitzpatrick, and Lord Albemarle and family, found their time pass lightly away; Mr. Fox, with a few chosen friends, was also truly happy and cheerful. . . . Lord Albemarle was sincerely beloved by Mr. Fox; Lady Albemarle, whose sincerity and *naiveté* were very pleasing, and who was the lovely mother of some fine children, there with her, also contributed to make St. Anne's Hill still more agreeable. . . . While at St. Anne's Hill, the despatches were brought to Mr. Fox, and forwarded from thence to his Majesty.

"It might be supposed by some, that the cares of his new situation abstracted him from all thoughts of his Greek; but I am going to give a proof of the lively concern he continued to take in every thing relating to the poets. Early one morning, I had Euripides in my hand, and was reading *Alcestis*. . . . 'How do you like it?' said Mr. Fox, entering, and well pleased to think a little about Euripides, instead of the perplexing state of the continent, and the complicated difficulties at home. . . .

"Mr. Fox's memory showed itself to be peculiarly powerful in regard to the poets. He had not read *Alcestis*, and consequently, the admired passage, for a long series of years, and yet he anticipated the very spot where he expected me to stop, with as much precision as if he had been looking over my shoulder. I have seen him, too, in speaking of Spenser's *Faery Queene* and Tasso, turn to the works of the Italian poet, and point out, here and there, lines and images, similar to parts of Spenser's work, with as much rapidity as if they had been marked out for him. Among the ancient English poets he entertained a sincere veneration for Chaucer, a poet, in tenderness and natural description, resembling Euripides."]

"He entertained a sincere veneration for Chaucer." He entertained *a sincere veneration* for so many, that we have reason to suppose he had little discrimination. His secretary has not produced or commemorated one specimen of acute or elegant criticism, one striking or new remark. Chaucer is indeed an admirable poet; until the time of

Shakespeare none equalled him; and perhaps none after, until ours.[1] The truth of his delineations, his humour, his simplicity, his tenderness, how different from the distorted images and gorgeous languor of Spenser! The language, too, of Chaucer was the language of his day, the language of those Englishmen who conquered France; that of Spenser is a strange uncouth compound of words, chopt off in some places and screwed out in others. His poem reminds me of a rich painted window, broken in pieces, where, amidst a thousand petty images, worked most laboriously and overlaid with colour, not one is well-proportioned or entire, where the whole is disfigured and deranged and darkened by the lead that holds them together. This, however, is not the principal fault, though surely a great one: the worst of all is the disgusting and filthy images on which he rests so frequently, and which he represents with such minuteness. He never attempts the terrific but he slips back again into nastiness. Envy chewing a toad[2] is described with all the coarseness and laboriousness of the worst Dutch painter. In

[1] Compare this with Landor's verses to Robert Browning:

"Browning! since Chaucer was alive and hale,
No man hath walkt along our roads with step
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse," etc.—*Works*, viii. 152.

[2] "And next to him malicious Envy rode
Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw
Between his cankered teeth a venemous tode."
*Faery Queene*, I. iv. 30.

satirical poets, such as Juvenal and Swift, we are somewhat less shocked at indelicacy, because in these there is no incongruity, however little a way such scenes and images may conduce towards virtue; but in allegory we are led to improvement through delight.

> Uncouth forms in disarray,
> Words which time has thrown away,

would be considered as blemishes in another, writing at a time when our language, if it had not acquired all its ease and polish, was in the highest state of its maturity and strength; but Spenser has been treated with peculiar lenity and favour, because no poet has been found so convenient by the critics to set up against their contemporaries. The days of chivalry seemed to be closing at this period, and their last lustre was reflected on his gorgeous allegory. Those who were opposed to Pope and Dryden, such as Blackmore and Addison, and Shadwell and Halifax, and Buckingham and Roscommon, are quoted as poets, only to show the instability of a premature and inordinate reputation.

But I am much mistaken if the time is far distant when the sound sense and vigour of Dryden, and his majestic versification, will again come into play, in despite of the impediments and encumbrances brought together from the refuse of his genius,

not more by the bad taste than by the greediness of publishers. That he cannot be read universally is a grievous fault, particularly as it arises from his gross immodesty and coarse allusions. Enough has been said on this subject. Ample justice has been awarded him in the greatest effort of the great Johnson; such is the *Life of Dryden*. He too, like Spenser, complained of neglect, and much more justly. In Dryden there is a degree of anger that his claims were overlooked and his rights withholden; in Spenser there is a lowness of spirits and a peevish whine that he could not have every thing he wanted. Weaker minds are lulled with his melancholy, stronger are offended at his unmanly and unreasonable discontent. It would be ridiculous to compare him with Burns, or Chatterton, or Cowper, yet in the attention he experienced, and in the largesses he received from the powerful, how infinitely more fortunate!

The present reign has produced a greater number of good poets than any in modern times; but the ears of our kings are still German, and the Muses have never revelled under the Georgian star. This, however disgraceful to our royal family, is the reason perhaps why poetry of late has not been degraded and dishonoured by flattery to princes and ministers, and why we have hardly one instance in our days of great talents united with great baseness. Some of our most admired

and excellent poems are, like the *Faery Queene*, without much order and arrangement, a deficiency which few, either of readers or of critics, are capable of observing. But the construction and proportions of a poem require not only much care, but, what would be less apparent to the ordinary reader, much genius and much imagination. Fitness and order and convenience, are terms very applicable to the epic, and if not often employed, it is because they are not found often. The *Faery Queene* is rambling and discontinuous, full of every impropriety, and utterly deficient in a just conception both of passion and of character. In Chaucer, on the contrary, we recognise the strong homely strokes, the broad and negligent facility, of a great master. Within his time and Shakespeare's, there was nothing comparable, nor, I think, between Shakespeare and Burns, a poet who much resembles him in a knowledge of nature and manners; who, in addition to this, is the most excellent of pastoral poets, not excepting Theocritus; and who in satire, if that indeed can add any thing to qualities so much greater, is not inferior to Pope, or Horace, or Aristophanes.

*Page* 397.—"In a certain debate, Mr. Canning attacked him with a greater degree of animosity than I thought becoming."

No acrimony is becoming, but some is natural.

It is natural for people to *speak* ill of those who, they are conscious, must *think* ill of them. Mr. Fox was the patron of young Canning, and treated him with much kindness. But if Mr. Fox was very good to him, Mr. Pitt had the more sugar-plums to give. He was a very extraordinary boy, and is a very extraordinary boy still. He has not grown an inch in intellect; he has, however, given one sure and unequivocal proof of his abilities, in making Lord Castlereagh popular for several days—as long a time as Lord Castlereagh was ever thought of. Those who have read the subject of their quarrel, and the letters that passed between them, will find that one prevaricates, and that both are answerable to the country for the loss of five thousand men, and for the worst of all our badly planned attacks.[1] Canning is among those sour productions, which acquire an early tinge of maturity, and drop off. It is idleness or unwariness in those who pick them up and taste them, and folly or shame in those who do not spit them out.

I remember an odd paraphrase of the verses which were written by Cæsar on Terence.[2] They are a little changed for the purpose:

[1] The duel between Canning and Lord Castlereagh was fought on September 21, 1809.

[2] Quoted by Suetonius, *Opera*, ii. 1118, Delphin ed. "Landor," Emerson writes, "invited me to breakfast. . . . He entertained us at once with reciting half a dozen hexameter lines of Julius Cæsar's!—from Donatus, he said."—*English Traits*, p. 4.

Tu quoque, tu in summis, o dimidiate *minister*,
Poneris, et merito, insulsi sermonis amator;
Acribus atque utinam scriptis adjuncta foret vis
*Publica*, ut æquato virtus polleret honore,
Unum hoc maceror, et doleo tibi deesse, Canini!

And thou art popt among the great,
Forsooth! a minister of state!
A Windham, were invective wit;
Would clamour make one, half a Pitt.
Satire we have, and rage, and rant:
Strength, spirit, these are all we want.
A mob and massacre or two
In Ireland, or at home would do,
And we shall see the very man in
The peevish petulant George Canning.

*Page* 402.—"[While Mr. Fox thus appeared contented and moderate, constant and affectionate to old friends, and attached to his books and the country, just as when he filled a private station, he also evinced a noble disinterestedness about his family and connections; he sought neither place nor pension for them on coming into office; he secured no reversions or sinecures for himself or them; and not a view or thought of his mind tended to his own or family's aggrandizement. A beloved and most deserving nephew, highly gifted in point of talent, liberal and of congenial mind to himself,] Lord Holland was without situation."

Yet I believe—for I know nothing of him personally—no man except Adair,[1] is more fitted

[1] Sir Robert Adair was afterwards Ambassador at Constantinople and Vienna. He was the friend both of Fox and Landor, and the Bobra-Dara-Adul-Phoola of Canning's satire in the *Anti-Jacobin*.

for a foreign court. Good-natured, frank, generous, and possessing a knowledge of modern languages and courtly customs, he would be equally conciliating and observant. Besides, any court would be somewhat pleased that Mr. Fox had given it a species of preference in sending his nephew to it. There are some contingencies in which the heart is accessible, even in courts; this is one of them. He should have sent Lord Holland to the Tuileries.

[*Pages* 412–14.—"In the beginning of June I received a message from her (Mrs. Fox), requesting me to come to him. . . . I found him reclining upon a couch, uneasy and languid. It seemed to me so sudden an attack that I was surprised and shocked. . . . Henceforth his illness rapidly increased. . . . The garden of the house at Stable Yard, since the Duke of York's, was daily crowded with anxious enquirers. The foreign ambassadors, or ministers, or private friends of Mr. Fox, walked there, eager to know his state of health."]

*Page* 419.—"[He now saw very few persons. At one singular interview I was at this time present.] Mr. Sheridan wished to see Mr. Fox [to which the latter reluctantly consented, requesting Lord Grey to remain in the room.] The meeting was short and unsatisfactory. Mr. Fox, with more coldness than I ever saw him assume to any one, spoke but a few words."

Mr. Fox in private life was a most sincere and amiable man. If he suppressed in society a part

of his indignant feelings, as a man so well-bred would do, he never affected a tone of cordiality towards those whom he reprobated or despised. We often find indeed in close apposition the names of Fox and Sheridan.[1] The conversation of the day comes after us into the closet, and a little of the newspaper sometimes finds its way into books. By writing in these newspapers, or by contracting a friendship with the editors, names appear in strange conjunctions, and celebrity is sustained for many years. Mr. Sheridan has written some pleasant and popular comedies, and the critics of the house of commons may call him the rival of Molière. Though I cannot quite assent to their opinion, or believe that a comic writer ever existed who could have been the rival of Molière (for if Menander was only the equivalent of two Terences,[2] he certainly was not the man), yet I think the French Institute erred most egregiously in giving a preference over him to the turgid and vociferous Klopstock. However it be, such people are not to be at the head, or near the head, of those who govern England. Still somewhat, and not little, is due to Mr. Sheridan as a member of the House. He has been more consistent than

[1] "Though they acted for many years together, there never seems to have been a very cordial or intimate friendship between Fox and Sheridan."—Earl Russell's *Life of Fox*, ii. 142.

[2] An allusion to Julius Cæsar's phrase, *dimidiate Menander* (see p. 217), which, however, had reference to Terence's custom of knocking two of Menander's plays into one.

Mr. Fox, whom, if he differed from him on some few occasions, he cannot be said to have deserted. He is really the most public of all public men, and makes a very conspicuous figure in the book which exhibits them to the world.

We live in an age when persons are willing to exempt posterity from all anxiety and doubts concerning them, and to guard their contemporaries from any injustice or inattention towards them. It is reported, and indeed seems evident, that the greater part of the personages who figure in the book entitled *Public Characters*, have written their own lives and transactions. "*The writer of this article*" seems always to know the most private affairs of these momentous public men. It is seldom that any anecdote can be added to such very important and satisfactory details, but I am enabled to add several, if several are requisite, to what illustrate one of these worthies who, unhappily for literature, at least for his own, is recently defunct. The gentleman was so extremely modest in the account he gave of himself, that he has omitted all those fine strokes of ingenuity for which he once was celebrated, and is still remembered, at the university. When the excellent and beloved Benwell[1]

[1] Landor refers, in *The Letters of a Conservative* (1836), to "the gentle and saintly Benwell, my private tutor at Oxford." He speaks of him with the same warmth of affection in a note to the Imaginary Conversation.—*Works*, iv. 400.

(titles which rarely come together) was about to leave Trinity college in Oxford, of which he was a tutor, the Rev. ——,[1] one of these "Public Characters" came into his rooms, and presented the usual felicitations on his approaching marriage. "Perhaps," added he, "since we must lose you, and your pupils must be under some other tutor, you will have the kindness to recommend them to my care."

"It is my intention," said the honest and calm Benwell, "to recommend one part of them to Dr. Flamank, and the other to you." Disappointed and vexed at this reply, he still had the admirable presence of mind to conceal his feelings, and to confess the fairness of the proposal. "My dear friend," continued he, "your kindness will lay me under eternal obligations. I hardly know how I can ask you to increase them, but as I must write letters of thanks to the parents of those young men who are about to become my pupils, and as you know my poetical pursuits and innumerable avocations, will you favour me with their names,

[1] It is clear from what Southey said (see Introduction) that Landor was referring to the Rev. Henry Kett (1761–1825), fellow and tutor of Trinity College, Oxford. There is a sketch of this gentleman in *Public Characters* for 1805, where it is said: "Perhaps Mr. Kett has conferred more honour on the University than any other individual now resident there; his name is familiar to every scholar, and very few learned men of any nation visit Oxford without obtaining an introduction to him." Landor ridiculed him both in prose and verse. One epigram is quoted in Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, ii. 482; and others in *Heroic Idyls*, pp. 177, 204. But he was not "recently defunct" in 1812.

that I may lose no time?" Benwell did so. Mr. —— immediately wrote to the parents of all the *others*, to solicit the patronage of *them*, "as the college was about to lose the talents of his dear and intimate friend Mr. Benwell."

He thus endeavoured to obtain *all* the pupils; one half by Mr. Benwell's recommendation, the other by his own dexterity; and that he never mentioned this piece of address, is a certain proof that he deserved all the favour and patronage he solicited. But it was not of a nature to be long concealed: it was a jewel of such magnitude and clearness that, on its first discovery, it threw a light on a profusion of others in the same vein, and encouraged both enemies and friends to pursue the examination. I heard the anecdote from a fellow of his college, who also gave several more, equally plain and circumstantial, and which do equal credit to Mr. ——'s abilities and virtues. The doctor referred me to so many witnesses, for so many and such surprising proofs of *talent*, that I could not cease from admiring, more and more, a character so indefatigable, so resolute, and so candid, and discoveries of such intricacy laid open unreservedly to the world.

*Page* 423.—["The Duke of Devonshire offered him (Mr. Fox) the use of Chiswick House as a resting-place, from whence, if he gained strength enough, he might proceed to St. Anne's. . . . Two

or three days before he was removed to Chiswick House, Mr. Fox sent for me, and with marked hesitation and anxiety, as if he much wished it, and yet was unwilling to ask it, informed me of his plan of going to Chiswick House, requesting me to form one of the family there. . . . About the end of July Mrs. Fox and he went there, and on the following day I joined them."]

*Pages* 436–7.—[" As his disorder had become entirely confirmed, and little or no hope existed of his recovery, the cabinet ceased to look to him for advice; and, before his great mind was harassed by the second inroad made by the disorder,] they, the other ministers, seemed to hold his retreat to Chiswick as a virtual resignation of office. Lord Grenville never came there; Lord *Grey*, I think, *rarely*."

We knew his abilities and principles before; we now know his feelings.

*Page* 438.—" Had I seen them *catching* from his lips those admonitions which those who are leaving the world give with peculiar effect, I should have augured better of the coming time."

The person to whom he alludes in particular, not only has no wisdom, but has no receptacle to catch it. He and his colleague might at least have had the common politeness, the mere decency, to inquire if Mr. Fox's health permitted him to give his advice. They acted not as if he were deprived of health, but of understanding. Even in that

case, unless he had resigned his office, it was their duty, and it could have done them no disservice, to ask of him what was his *opinion*. A trait of such gross brutality is disgraceful to the very name of England. The prince regent will read of it with horror; judging from those noblemen who have been most about his person, he will find it difficult to believe that any one of that rank should have been so indifferent to decent manners, so insensible to common humanity. He may listen to some excuses for the deserter of his party, none will he endure for the deserter of his friend. He will never employ such wretches. We shall owe to the exposure of their hearts what the exposure of their intellect solicited in vain.

It is delightful to turn from these hard-featured, dry, *αμενηνα καρηνα*,[1] towards the benevolent author of the *Memoirs*. His feelings, at times, give him all the air and character of genius. A pure and energetic warmth elevates his imagination when he describes his friend gazing on the berries of the mountain-ash, from the window at Chiswick. The description is not unworthy of Rousseau.

[*Page* 450.—"A few days before the termination of his mortal career, he said to me at night, 'Holland thinks me worse than I am'; and, in fact, the appearances were singularly delusive, not a week before he expired. In the day he arose, and walked

[1] Νεκύων ἀμενηνὰ κάρηνα.—HOMER, *Odyssey*, xi. 29.

a little, and his looks were not ghastly or alarming by any means. Often did he latterly walk to his window to gaze on the berries of the mountain-ash, which hung clustering on a young tree at Chiswick House: every morning, he returned to look at it; he would praise it, as the morning breeze rustling shook the berries and leaves. . . . His last look on that mountain-ash was his farewell to nature."]

*Page* 467.—"[Mr. Fox expired between five and six in the afternoon of the 13th of September.] The Tower guns were firing for the capture of Buenos Ayres[1] as he was breathing his last."

A capture not less deplorable, and hardly less disgraceful, than our subsequent defeat.

[1] General Beresford entered the city of Buenos Ayres on June 27, 1806. Despatches announcing the capture of the city reached England early in September. On September 20, *The Annual Register* says, the treasure captured from the Spanish settlement was brought to town in eight waggons, on each of which was a Jack Tar holding a flag inscribed with the word "Treasure." The waggons were escorted by the Loyal Britons, commanded by Colonel A. Davison, the rear being brought up by the Clapham Volunteers.

# CHAPTER XIII

## SOME LETTERS FROM C. J. FOX

The Peace of Amiens—Homer's *Iliad*—Poets of the sea—Virgil and Metastasio—Advice to a law student—Blackstone's *Commentaries*—Robertson's style—Adam Smith's *Moral Sentiments*—Goldsmith—Dr. Johnson—Scholarship in France—Bonaparte and men of learning—Ignorance of Greek—Euripides—Shakespeare's Caliban—Supernatural in poetry—Allegory—Plato—Collins and Shenstone—Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*.

### [*C. J. Fox to J. B. Trotter*

ST. ANNE'S HILL, *Oct.* 19, 1801.

". . . You will, of course, have been rejoiced at the peace,[1] as we all are. . . . I think this place has looked more beautiful than ever this year, both in spring and summer, and so it does now in autumn. I have been very idle about my *History*, but I will make up for it by and bye; though I believe I must go to Paris, to look at some papers there, before I can finish the first volume. . . ."

"I think in the last half of the *Iliad* you will admire the 16th, 20th, 22nd, and 24th books particularly.] I believe the general opinion is that Homer did write near the sea-shore."—*Memoirs*, p. 497.

[1] The preliminaries of peace between England and France were signed in London, by Lord Hawkesbury and M. Otto, on Oct. 1, 1801. The definitive treaty was signed at Amiens in March, 1802.

Virgil, too, is fond of describing scenes of the sea and sea-shore; but Metastasio is the poet for seas. He has turned more than a dozen of them into his airs. We have hardly a metaphor or a simily without a sea.

[*C. J. Fox to J. B. Trotter*

HÔTEL RICHELIEU, PARIS, *Oct.* 28, 1802.

". . . I suppose you will now go in earnest to *law*. I do not know much of the matter, but I suspect that a regular attendance (and with attention) to the courts, is still more important than any reading whatever;] you of course read Blackstone over and over again; and if so," etc. —*Memoirs*, p. 512.

After *of course* there is no room for *if so*; but to proceed.

"Pray tell me whether you agree with me in thinking his style[1] of English the very best among our modern writers, always easy and intelligible, far more correct than Hume, and less studied and made up than Robertson."[2]

This last writer is very finical in style, but there always is clearness in the narrative, and good sense

[1] Speaking in the House of Commons on March 3, 1806, Fox said of Blackstone: "His purity of style I particularly admire. He is distinguished as much for simplicity and strength as any writer in the English language."

[2] Pressed by Boswell for his opinion of Robertson's *History of Scotland*, Dr. Johnson said: "Sir, I love Robertson, and I won't talk of his book." On another occasion he said: "Sir, if Robertson's style be faulty, he owes it to me: that is, having too many words, and those big ones."

in the observations. He never is great. Throughout all the extensive regions he has traversed, the footstep of genius is nowhere to be traced. The Scotch authors are not contented with English; they want something better. No work is so totally made up of what are called rounded sentences as Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. If his wisdom could not withstand such meretricious allurements, how could we expect more firmness and resistance in Robertson? Of all modern historians, Davila[1] has most genius, usually so called; a dangerously high quality in their department.

I love Goldsmith. The poet never transgresses into the province of the historian. There is nothing profound or important in him; but his language is gracefully familiar, every thing about him is sufficiently correct and well-placed, his style is polished enough, and he invites us by an ingenuous and frank simplicity. Johnson in his *Lives of the Poets*, Goldsmith, Blackstone, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, are the best of our later prose-writers. Harris,[2] Warton,[3] etc., etc., disgust

[1] In the *Imaginary Conversations* Marvel compares Davila with Bacon, saying that they were the only men of high genius among the moderns who had attempted historical composition.—Landor, *Works*, v. 47. Davila's *Istoria della Guerre Civile* was translated into English, in the seventeenth century, by W. Aylesbury and C. Cotterell.

[2] James Harris (1709–1780) author of *Hermes*.

[3] Joseph Warton, see below, p. 232, is probably referred to, not his young brother, Thomas, Poet Laureate in 1785.

by their frippery and affectation even those whom their reading could have instructed.

[*From the same letter*

"It is a pity you did not see, while you were here, Villerson, the great Grecian, if it were only for the purpose of knowing how fast it is possible for the human voice to go without indistinctness. I believe he could recite the whole *Iliad* in four hours."]

*Page* 512.—In Mr. Fox's letter from Paris, Villoison[1] is called Villerson. He is one of the few remaining scholars now resident in France. Those who know little of him, and do not think it important to know much, will find him mentioned in Wyttenbach's life of Ruhnken.[2] Scholarship is so extremely low in his country that, out of near seventy bishops, I was informed, only three were supposed to be capable of construing the Greek

[1] Jean Baptiste Gaspard d'Ansse de Villoison (1750–1805), Greek scholar and member of the French Institute. He edited the *Pastoral* of Longus with "a superfluity of erudition," and a tenth-century MS. of Homer, which he found in the Library of St. Mark's, Venice. Bonaparte created for him a professorship of ancient and modern Greek in the College of France, but he died soon afterwards. Compare Landor, *Works*, iv. 40: "Latterly we have seen only Villoison and Larcher fairly escape from the barbarous ignorance around them."

[2] Wyttenbachii, *Vita Ruhnkenii*, Lugd. Bat., 1799. Mark Pattison, in his *Life of Casaubon*, referred to Wyttenbach, Ruhnken, and Bentley as rare examples, in the eighteenth century, of consummate learning; but Ruhnken's name may be better known from Porson's verses:

"I went to Strasburg, where I got drunk,
With that most learned professor Brunk;
I went to Wortz and got more drunken
With that more learned professor Ruhnken."

testament. Yet Bonaparte had taken all measures to collect men of some learning. Under the old government no knowledge of Greek was thought necessary; but the chief Consul, though contented with those who enjoyed the reputation of general good conduct, would gladly have promoted men of literature to the vacant sees. At the time I am speaking of,[1] I *believe* there were near seventy. It was the October before the renewal of hostilities when I heard the fact mentioned, by a person from whom I received some assistance, and many civilities, in the national library; that there were only *three* who had received such instruction as every boy of liberal education, in our country, has acquired at the age of fourteen, appeared strange to me, and the exact number has been impressed more indelibly on my memory.[2]

[*C. J. Fox to J. B. Trotter*

St. Anne's Hill, *Friday.*

". . . I am very glad you prefer Euripides to Sophocles, because it is my taste; though I am not sure that it is not thought a heresy. . . . Though

[1] October, 1802. Landor was then staying in Paris.

[2] "When Calvinism was making a progress in France, the Catholic bishops were learned men; indeed, so learned that Joseph Scaliger, himself a Calvinist, acknowledged, in the latter part of his life, their immense superiority over the rising sect. At present there is only one bishop in France capable of reading a chapter in the Greek testament, which every schoolboy in England, for whatever profession he is designed, must do at eleven years of age."—Landor, *Imaginary Conversations*, 1824, i. 221.

the two plays[1] of Euripides which you have read, are undoubtedly *among* his best, I will venture to assure you that there are four others you will like full as well: *Medea*, *Phœnissæ*, *Heraclidæ*, and *Alcestis*; with the last of which, if I know any thing of your taste, you will be enchanted. . . . *Orestes* and *Andromache* are, in my judgment, the worst. I have not mentioned *Rhesus* and *Cyclops*, because the former is not thought to be really Euripides's, and the latter is entirely comic, or rather a very coarse farce; excellent, however, in its way, and the conception of the character not unlike that of Shakespeare's Caliban.—*Memoirs*, p. 516.]

"The character of the Cyclops in Euripides is not unlike that of Caliban in Shakespeare." I could not help making the same remark, in some observations on the properties and signs of invention. The character of the Cyclops is broad and general, that of Caliban is peculiar and unique; it is admirably conceived and equally well-sustained throughout. What I most applaud in it are the feelings with which Shakespeare has endowed the creature. Another poet would have represented him as spiteful and malicious, and perhaps without any reason for his being so, but Shakespeare has made the infringement of his idleness the origin of his malice. He has also made him grateful; but then his gratitude is the return for an

[1] *Hippolytus Crowned* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*.

indulgence of his evil appetites. Those who by nature are grateful, are also by nature vindictive; one of these properties is the sense of kindness, the other of unkindness. But religion, and habit, and comfort, require that the one should be cherished, and that the other should be suppressed.[1]

The mere conception of such a monster as Caliban, without these opposite qualities, without the sudden impressions which bring them vividly out, and the circumstances in which they are displayed would not be, to considerate minds, so stupendous as it appeared to Joseph Warton, who little knew that *nil admirari* is as requisite to wisdom as to happiness.

No new fiction of a supernatural being exists in poetry. Hurd[2] traced the genealogical descent of the faeries, etc., etc., and fancied he made a fine discovery. The sylphs have only another name. Dragons, and wizards, and witches, and giants, are powerful agents; but they generally prove the imbecility of the writer who has any thing to do with them. Dreams, perhaps, first produced such images, superstition presented them with attributes, and the poet brought all into action.

[1] Portions of this and the following paragraph were afterwards incorporated in the Imaginary Conversation between Landor and the Abbé Delille. See *Works*, iv. 130.

[2] Richard Hurd, Bishop of Worcester (died 1808), in his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance.*

A few writers have indulged in allegory who have not been deficient in genius; for instance, it is in allegory, and there alone, that Addison has any; delicacy of humour, in which he also is eminent, can hardly lay claim to such a quality. Plato, in addition to almost every other talent, possessed one for allegory, but he would not have founded a poem on it, nor have permitted it to superabound in one. It manifests a want of higher invention, and those poets who have indulged in it have shown but little taste or fancy in any thing else, have seldom reached the sublime, and more seldom the pathetic. Collins[1] comes nearest of all to an exception, but though he excels the other allegorical poets in delicacy and proportions, he appears to greatest advantage when he has escaped from the trammels of this perverted taste. The stanza of Spenser is truly delightful, and there seems to be something creative in its harmony. Shenstone,[2] a poor poet in other things, becomes an admirable one in *The Schoolmistress*. The languor of Thomson is graceful in *The Castle of Indolence*, and his redundancy is kept within some bounds by the stanza.

It is better to leave off where reflection may rest than where passion may be excited, and it

[1] Landor thought Collins's *Hassan* excellent, but "surpassed by Burns and Scott."—*Works*, viii. 378.

[2] "Shenstone, when he forgot his Strephons and Corydons, and followed Spenser, became a poet."—Landor, *Works*, iv. 187.

is soothing to take the last view of politics from amongst the works of imagination:

> Despicere unde queas alios passimque videre
> Errare, atque viam palenteis quærere vitæ.[1]

An escape, in this manner, from the mazes of politics and the discord of party, leaves such sensations on the heart as are experienced by the disinterested and sober man after some public meeting, when he has quitted the crowded and noisy room, the crooked and narrow streets, the hisses and huzzas of the rabble, poor and rich, and enters his own grounds again, and meets his own family at the gate.

[1] Lucretius, *De Rerum Nat.*, ii. 9.

# CHAPTER XIV

## POSTSCRIPT

The Right Hon. George Rose—Defaulting members of Parliament—Portuguese Royal family—Flight to Brazil—South America—Irish Attorney-General—Legal cruelty—Italian vivisectionists—Spallanzani and Fontana—Jeffreys and Scroggs—The Laws of England.

### I

It might be expected that I should say something of Mr. Rose's book.[1] I leave him, however, where I found him, and where Mr. Fox too, I am certain, would have left him. The King has been graciously pleased to distinguish him by the title of right honourable; I should probably have distinguished him by one very different, and certainly much more lasting. But it would have been an unworthy and most idle business; for it is only on soft and miry ground that such creatures can leave any impression. Their impetuous attack is not courage, but stupidity, and their dissonant clamour is not for our security, but for their own voracious and insatiable appetite. Perhaps it might be cruel

[1] *Observations on the Historical Work of C. J. Fox*, by the Rt. Hon. George Rose, 1809. Rose, who was Treasurer of the Navy in the Duke of Portland's administration, and held the same office under Perceval, was appointed to the Privy Council in January, 1802.

to break the neck they stretch out so angrily and so awkwardly, yet it would be a piece of good husbandry to pluck them well, and to turn them up again on their common.

If to attack the opinions or the conduct of Mr. Fox requires the help of distortion, of misquotation, of falsehood, I leave it to those *right honourables* whom Mr. Pitt raised up from obscurity, and cherished for their obliquity and baseness, and placed on benches where a little more dirtiness would be indifferent and imperceptible. I never thought Mr. Fox a very powerful man, unless a readiness and aptitude in debate can constitute it; but no man whatever is powerful enough to make me a liar. If I am less than another, by nature or by misfortune, be it so; but never let me afford to the vicious an advantage he could not have taken. He who wishes to avoid a blow may stoop, but he who strikes must not; and no living soul ever yet rose up from a falsehood with the same activity and strength which he enjoyed before. Mr. Rose may be considered, at least by his party, as a perfectly honest man, and I have no inclination to meddle with his integrity, but I must observe that it is quite as easy to make a mistake in the complex accounts of revenue, as in the simple and progressive figures which denote the regular pages of every common book. If any thing is put down, or erased, or

added wrong in the one case, it may also in the other, by the same person; and we have seen several instances, lately, where members of the *honourable house* have actually fallen into this error. Some, after their misfortune, have proposed to retire into Wales, some into Portugal, some into America; others are not yet willing to remove their *stake* from the country, and continue in the full enjoyment of their places and their authority.[1]

I hope I shall always be blessed with sufficient loyalty to acknowledge the power of precedent; and when I consider the actions of the *charitable corporation*, in the reign of George II.,[2] and the countenance which was shown to the greater part of the defaulters by their *honourable friends*, I think it an unjust, and perhaps an unlawful act, to bear hardly upon those who have vacated their seats by the persecution of fortune, whether they go to enjoy the Christmas convivialities of Wales, or their affairs call them into the United States, or their health requires the temperature of Lisbon; and I applaud the firmness and consistency, and right feeling, of the present parliament, in not

[1] Joseph Hunt, M.P., late Treasurer of the Board of Ordnance, was expelled from the House in 1810, in consequence of the disclosures made in the twelfth report of the Commissioners of Military Inquiry. He had already left, on plea of ill health, for Lisbon.

[2] Infamous malversation was detected in the Charitable Corporation, formed for the relief of the industrious poor by small loans at legal interest. The Corporation, in some cases, took 10 per cent., and advanced large sums on goods obtained on credit by fraudulent speculators.—STANHOPE's *History of England*, ii. 150.

rejecting any member from its bosom for the denunciations either of the people or the laws.

If, after all, it appears to any that I have written elsewhere with acrimony, let him consider whether it proceeded not naturally from the subject; whether the juices were not produced by the soil, rather than by the hook and harrow. It is only a starved or pusillanimous genius that is driven to a defence; enough is it for me that there never was a bad man whom I have not treated as a bad man, nor a good whom I have not treated as a good. Were such the sentiment and demeanour of all who aspire to any rank in literature, and possess any in society, more effectual benefit would result to the cause of virtue, than from all the laws and institutions of mankind. The sources of evil lie in the higher regions of the moral world, and the stream descends wider and fouler to the last. If a person who committed any kind of base action was not received and countenanced by people of his own rank and condition, he would not easily find his way further. He would be like a misshapen rock whose support had given way, and which had been precipitated to the bottom of a mountain, where, having lost by its fall whatever was romantic in its form, or colour, or elevation, a strong earthern fence stopped its progress, and where the husbandman thanked God that it had not desolated his house, or swept away the fruits of his industry.

## II

By the part we are now taking in foreign politics, it is much to be apprehended that the queen of Portugal,[1] whom heaven has deprived of her intellects, and the prince of Brazil, to whom they certainly have not been transferred, may, by the rashness and insolence of their ministers, and by that insensibility to shame and honour, from which fugitives and outcasts never quite recover, be delivered into the hands of the patriots. Many in South America would forget the causes of their indignation, on seeing the old woman and her *infante*, first presenting grimaces to the drummer boys, and afterwards a suit of embroidery to the executioner and his mistress. This is horrible to me, who believe that the infliction of stripes on women is the most certain and execrable criterion of barbarism, and who, however much I admire the Roman institutions, think those punishments superfluous and cruel which preceded their capital punishments; who even think that these punishments should be very rare indeed, and inflicted only on powerful offenders, such as have subverted or endangered the constitutions it was their duty and office to protect. It is horrible to those who have never suffered by their neighbour's ambition, or by their

[1] On November 29, 1807, the Portuguese royal family, under the protection of Sir Sidney Smith, had left Lisbon for Brazil.

ruler's fatuity; but those who have seen foreigners invade their territory, and militate against their independence, will not perhaps call a people excessively vindictive in exposing the person and sacrificing the life of one or two principal culprits, such as infamously stood aloof from danger, and scattered every where around them death and desolation. Perhaps the people of Buenos Ayres may mistake this most faithful majesty and this most apostolic prince for some such agitators and disturbers of the public peace, and, judging the crime, not the rank (a truly revolutionary error), leave a memorable lesson, to all such persons, how they interfere with the concerns of a great and gallant people, determined to assert its independence, and able to defend its rights.

## III

I have lately read, in a history of Irish affairs, written since Dr. Curry published his *Review of the Civil Wars in Ireland*,[1] which work presents also an admirable synopsis of legal transactions there, an account of an attorney general,[2] who brought gentlemen of the first respectability to

[1] *An Historical and Critical Review of the Civil Wars in Ireland, etc.*, by J. Curry, M.D., new edition, 1810.

[2] Southey's letters (see Introduction) make it clear that Landor was referring to William Saurin, appointed Irish Attorney-General in 1807. Landor, however, unwilling to risk a charge of libel, is not very explicit either as to his authorities or to his allegations. His attack on Saurin may have been suggested by the trial of Dr. Edward Sheridan, prosecuted in 1811 under the provisions of the Convention Act of 1793.

trial, when, according to his own confession, he believed them to be perfectly innocent of all the charges, and wanted only to prove the *validity* of an unconstitutional and most tyrannical law. Surely this is going rather further than Jeffreys, or Scroggs, or Finch, or Page, whom we have always considered as the most iniquitous men on record; for they at least pretended that their victims were guilty, and had offended against a known, a positive, an established law. The amazement and horror he perceived on the countenances of his audience, sent him staggering into perjury. He denied his own acknowledgment, although several shorthand writers had taken down every word. Happily for us, there is no danger of any such man appearing, in that or this country, in the present times.

This lawyer must surely be a more impudent man than ever appeared at the bar before, in any capacity whatsoever, and, in understanding, must be far below

> That blockhead Betsworth,
> Though half a crown o'erpaid his sweat's worth,[1]

[1] "In a satire printed in 1773, ridiculing the Dissenters for pretending to the title of 'Brother Protestants and Christians,' the Dean [Swift], among other ludicrous illustrations of their presumption, introduced the simile:

> 'Thus at the bar the booby B——,
> Though half a crown o'erpays his sweat's worth,
> Who knows in law nor text nor margent,
> Calls Singleton his brother sergeant.'"

Bettesworth, M.P. and serjeant-at-law, was notorious for his florid elocution. See Swift's *Works*, ed. Sir Walter Scott, i. 418.

who has received his viaticum long ago from the memorable dean of St. Patrick's.

On another occasion he said, "he would not answer to any accusation which charged him with abuse of authority, because the public had sufficient pledges in his conscience and oath, and in his rank and situation."

Silly booby! as if rank and situation were pledges against abuse of authority; when, on the contrary, without rank and situation there can be no authority at all; when, indeed, it is this authority itself which constitutes the rank and situation. These three, clearly enough, are one. Take away the authority, and the situation is past discovery; take away the rank, and the person who loses it loses also the authority. Pledges ought to be weighty and valid in proportion to *the quantity and activity of authority* which may possibly bear against us; but they cannot be given *from out* of this quantity, etc. To say that the authority, which alone can commit the abuse complained of, is in itself a pledge against itself, would be a grosser piece of stupidity than the most benighted blunderer could stumble on "in bog and fen!" It requires a very profound ignorance of human intellect, and a very profound contempt of what is lovely and august in moral sentiment, to cover the most hideous iniquity with nothing but the most flimsy false-

hoods. We do not weigh exactly, and by the scruple, how much may be reposed on the *conscience and oath* of a person who brings to trial, and bids the jury to condemn, those whom he declared he believed *not guilty*, at the very time he was arraigning them; but if we place his oath and conscience in the lump, against the oath and conscience of any pilloried perjurer in the three kingdoms, we shall find the latter character the less infamous and detestable; for it is certain that no one of this description has, by any false oath, by any malevolence, by any hope of profit or promotion, laid such a dark and combustible train for the consternation and explosion of his fellow citizens. He was confident of their innocence, and accused them only for experiment!

Spallanzani[1] has been thought cruel, and justly too, for putting bats to excruciating pain, in order to try whether they could escape his nets and narrow threads without their eyes; and so has been Fontana,[2] who inflicted on some thousand animals the venom of the viper, to remark on which, and in what quantities, and under what irritation, it was deadly; but this atrocious wretch involves his own fellow creatures, fellow citizens, school-fellows, next-door neighbours, in the toils of law, which he bids their inveterate enemies

[1] Lazarus Spallanzani (1729–1799), Italian naturalist.
[2] Felix Fontana (1730–1805), Italian naturalist and philosopher.

pull tight, in order to try whether the materials are strong, and whether those whom he encloses will survive. After such actions as these, his pledges of oath and conscience, with all their tawdriness of ostentation, are such vile and worthless things as no pawnbroker in the suburbs would give a token for; and as to *his* claim of confidence from situation and rank, let us only look back, to save trouble, on those lawyers of past ages whose example I have cited. They possessed the same situation, the same principles, with infinitely more acuteness and discretion. They joked over their bottle, they enjoyed their witticisms; yet were they nefarious and blood-thirsty villains; they had a law for every occasion but justice, and had a speech for every day but the day of retribution.

It is *because* men like these possess rank and situation, that we demand some pledge for our security. A pickpocket could not throw me into prison for thirty years, or make me pay thirty pounds, before he would listen to my defence, or even force me to a defence in court, unless a jury had found a true bill against me; yet I might have grievously offended this said pickpocket, both by resisting him in the exercise of his occupation, and by calling him what he would rather be than be called. Against a pickpocket we have, or ought to have, something of a security; how much rather then against men infinitely

more dexterous in their fraudulence, infinitely more violent in the detection of it, who encounter no danger in committing their atrocities, no difficulty in defending them, but in whom, on the contrary, every act of violence is loyal zeal, and every unconstitutional maxim is legal perspicacity. Miserable men! Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the affairs of our country are conducted with such wisdom that there is not the remotest danger of any change unfavourable to you; that our strength is imperishable, that our resources are inexhaustible; that there are no beings more wise, more energetic than you; that the tide of genius must always be confined in narrow straits, and run under, and run counter to, the tide of fortune; yet the flattering unction which you are laying to your souls will not render them invulnerable long. Ye must all, in a few years at the furthest, lose your "rank and situation"; but your "consciences" will not be taken from you, nor will the resignation, though very, very voluntary, be accepted. The fear of God, so salutary when it mingles with every thought and action, and is inhaled with every breath from the cradle to the grave, is dreadful when it rushes on a mortal all at once, and closes the dying hour.

THE END

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